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DRAMATICS

An Educational Magazine for Directors, Teachers, and Students of Dramatic Arts

Vol. XXVI, No. 8

MAY, 1955

50c Per Copy

FRANCE: WORLD THEATRE CENTER

by LEON ZITRONE

LET'S MAKE A MOVIE

by WILLIAM JOHNSON

DON'T OVERLOOK VARIETY

by ROBERT O. WISE, JR.

THE AMERICAN THEATRE TO WORLD WAR I

by ARTHUR H. BALLET

HOW DOES YOUR PROPS ROOM GROW?

by JEAN E. DONAHEY

FIRST NIGHTS

by ROBERT W. ENSLEY

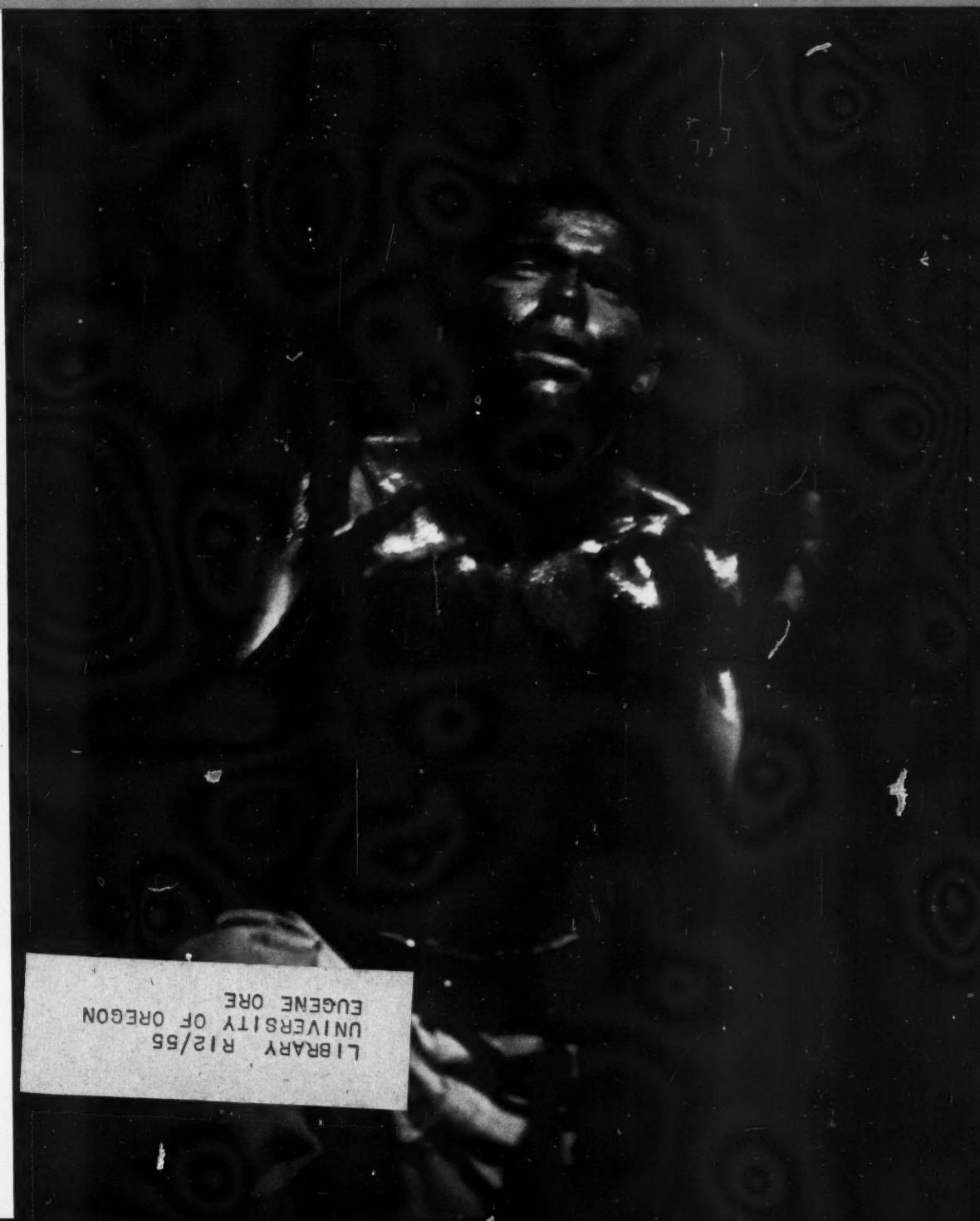
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DRAMATICS

(DRAMATICS is published by The National Thespian Society, an organization of teachers and students devoted to the advancement of dramatic arts in the secondary schools)

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EDITORIAL STAFF

Editor: Leon C. Miller	College Hill Station Cincinnati 24, Ohio
Assistant Editor: Grace Huelsman	College Hill Station Cincinnati 24, Ohio
Contributing Editors: Arthur H. Ballet	University of Minnesota Minneapolis, Minnesota
Robert W. Ensley	State Teachers College Indiana, Pa.
William Johnson	Kling Studios, Inc. Chicago, Illinois
Department Editors: Earl W. Blank	Northeastern State College Tahlequah, Oklahoma
Si Mills	New York City
Paul Myers	Theatre Collection Public Library New York, New York
Willard Friederich	Marietta College Marietta, Ohio
Frieda Reed	Upper Darby Sr. High School Upper Darby, Pa.
Advisory Editors: Jean E. Donahey	Senior High School Brownsville, Pennsylvania
Harry T. Leeper	East Fairmont High School Fairmont, West Virginia
Marion Stuart	Senior High School Champaign, Illinois
Blandford Jennings	Clayton High School Clayton, Missouri
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As I See It . . .

BEST OF HIGH SCHOOL THEATRE

RECENTLY a pamphlet came to my desk with the heading, "Not the play's the thing; the players are the thing." As with too many promotion projects only half truths are told—not the whole truth.

I certainly can find no fault with "the players are the thing." I firmly believe that all students who show any interest in secondary school theatre should be given the opportunity to participate in the dramatic arts program of the school. Talent must be recognized whatever it may be. We are fortunate that our "team" is not limited only to *one or two talents*. For the actor there is the cast of the play; for the director, student directing; for the carpenter, building scenery; for the painter, painting scenery and furniture; for the electrician, stage lighting; for the seamstress, costumes and slip covers; for the designer, original posters and programs; for the journalists, news articles for school papers, local papers, school annuals; for the photographer, photographs of all phases of production; for the business student, sales promotion, ticket sales; for the musician and vocalists, musical comedies, operettas and even operas. There is a place for practical use of all available talent in the dramatic arts. Our sin, if any, is that most of us do not take full advantage of this talent, miss it entirely, or just do not have the time to make the most of it. Yet if we direct plays, how can we excuse our sins of omission? Yes, the player is the thing, and we as directors, owe it to our students, our community and our nation to make the most of it. We are thus doing our job to help build a strong America.

On the other hand, "the play is the thing" too. Whenever we charge admission for any one of our productions, we cannot afford to present to our audiences anything except the best high school theatre. The selection of the play is our first consideration. It is not any more difficult to present well the best written plays than to present poorly written, grotesquely-staged plays. I am not talking solely about the "Best of Broadway," for although the best of the commercial theatre is not necessarily too difficult for high schools, it is in most cases just plain too sexy and vulgar. Usually if we get one good play a year from Broadway, we can consider ourselves lucky. We are fortunate that during this past year several recent Broadway plays that can be presented by most schools were released.

There are other plays that were never on Broadway, were never intended for Broadway, which are excellent high school theatre. They are well written, superbly staged, and very popular with both casts and audiences. To a sponsor who feels that he must do only Broadway plays, his choice is very much limited; and if he is in the business for any length of time, he will have no other alternative except to repeat plays ever so often. He too sometimes makes the mistake of selecting the "wrong" Broadway play, which may bring upon him damaging criticism.

Yes, in selecting the play for public presentation, the play is the thing. For you who want to build up your audiences, to remove the stigma, "just a high school play" (and who doesn't?), careful selection is of primary importance. Your selections can make or break your entire dramatic arts program. It is the key which opens the first door to good high school theatre.

Casting, directing and rehearsing the play are the other keys. Here intelligent acting talent must be recognized. Merely "putting on a play" is not enough. Your audience will not come again to see plays carelessly cast, sloppily directed and rehearsed, poorly presented—and neither would I. Were no admission charged, you can use all students interested, but not necessarily talented. Yet, I'll bet my last dime that a poorly-cast play at a school assembly

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will receive a poor, boisterous, and sometimes dangerous reaction from the students so much so that the administration will become very much alarmed. I've seen that happen in school assemblies in which the principals of the school found themselves in embarrassing situations—and then the roof fell in!

Yes, the play is the thing in selection, in casting, in directing, in rehearsing, in presentation. An audience expects to receive full value for all money spent. The high school theatre is slowly gaining national recognition as good theatre. May we all dedicate ourselves to present only the "Best of High School Theatre."

REGIONAL CONFERENCES

AS THIS SCHOOL term comes to a close, all over the country attending regional and area conferences, several performances of plays of our affiliated schools, state festivals and in one case a state principals' conference. North, south, east or west I found the high school theatre robustly healthy; our young Thespians keenly interested and proud of their own school theatre; interest in, cooperation for and appreciation of theatre by school administrators. To all of our regional directors and sponsors who made this past year so active for the Thespians in their respective states, my humble, but appreciative, thank you for a job well done. You, not I, are building a stronger National Thespian Society.

I suggest for future conferences, especially in heavily populated Thespian states, that we follow the plan set up in Ohio by our capable Regional Director, Florence Hill. She has so organized her state that five, not one, conferences are held yearly. The state is divided into five areas: Northwest, Southwest, Central, Northeast and Southeast. These conferences are held on Saturdays only and, although open to all Ohio Thespian Troupes, are well attended by our troupes within a hundred mile area. We have thus reduced the expenses of delegates, done away with the problem of overnight housing, and removed most of the hazards of traveling. By this procedure approximately 1000 Thespians attend our Ohio conferences. Several other states under the guidance of their Regional Directors are following this plan by holding two conferences yearly instead of the customary one.

That these regional and area conferences are paying dividends is reflected in our remarkable growth during the past two years. We expect this year to pass the 154 new schools added to our roster during the Silver Anniversary Celebration year. By June 1 we anticipate our national roll to be 1550 affiliated schools.

AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK

THE NATIONAL Education Association has set November 6-12 as American Education Week. Before school closes all Thespian Sponsors should plan now the role their theatre departments and Thespian Troupes will play in its observance. For us to ignore this important Week just doesn't make sense! You had better be prepared, for knowing principals as I do, I'll wager you will be called upon next fall to participate. Why not beat the gun?

PRESIDENT EISENHOWER SPEAKS

AS AN AMATEUR artist, President Eisenhower feels the Government should do something about the arts. He said: "The Federal Government should do more to give official recognition to the importance of the arts and other cultural activities. I shall recommend the establishment of a Federal Advisory Commission on the Arts . . . to advise the Federal Government on ways to encourage artistic endeavor and appreciation."

DREAM OF TOMORROW

THE SCHOOL OF tomorrow will be in session all-year round. The 12-month school year is bound to come because the peo-

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ple will demand it. So believes G. Max Wingo, University of Michigan. He adds: "We are going to have to take a lesson from the summer camps and offer greater recreational facilities, especially during the summer months, and we're going to have to take over this function fairly soon. I'll go so far as to say this school will be in session not only 12 months but seven days a week, serving important social needs evenings and weekends. There's so much money tied up in the schools it doesn't make sense for them to be locked up at any time."

CONTEST FOR TEACHERS

HOW I TEACH During the First Week of School" is the title of a contest conducted by SCHOLASTIC TEACHER magazine and the American Textbook Publishers Institute. Its purpose, according to M. R. Robinson, president of Scholastic Magazines, "is to give teachers throughout the nation an opportunity to tell other teachers about their most successful ways of challenging and interesting students as the new school year begins."

All active teachers of any subject in grades four through 12 may enter the contest by submitting manuscripts not exceeding 1,500 words. There will be three awards: 1st-\$300; 2nd-\$200; five 3rd prizes of \$100 each.

All entries must reach SCHOLASTIC TEACHER, 33 West 42nd Street, New York 36, N. Y., postmarked no later than midnight, June 30, 1955.

WILLING TO PAY

HERE IS ONE business corporation that is unhappy because it is paying too little for public education. The New York Trap Rock Corp., Newburgh, N. Y., wants to donate an additional 1 per cent over its present school taxes to get better teaching in the communities where the company operates or owns property. Six large-sized Hudson Valley towns would benefit by this move if accepted by their boards of education. The corporation informed the

REGIONAL CONFERENCES—1955

OHIO Parma Schaaf High School, Parma, Betty J. Bartlett, Sponsor, October 14.

OHIO Findlay High School, Findlay, Wilbur Hall, Sponsor, October 22.

OHIO Colerain High School, Cincinnati, Mary Berry, Sponsor, November 5.

Newburgh board of education it hopes other large companies will follow its example.

OUR SPONSORS SPEAK

WE WISH TO thank The National Thespian Society for the motivation, inspiration and material assistance which has made dramatics one of the most vital activities on our campus. The president of our Thespian Troupe has a seat on the Eagle Rock Student body cabinet, is a member of the leadership class, and is considered a student-body office at Eagle Rock. We now have three dramatics classes and two speech classes in our curriculum. (Junior Drama, Senior Drama I, Play Production and Public Speaking I and II.) Three years ago there was no drama or speech at Eagle Rock High School.—Robert L. Rivera, Sponsor, Troupe 1287, Eagle Rock High School, Los Angeles, California.

"We do enjoy DRAMATICS Magazine very much; particularly were my students thrilled

recently at an 'operetta' article, as we had just produced Gilbert and Sullivan's *Patience*. It was great fun! The bulletins and other info that keep us in touch with you and fellow Thespians throughout the U. S. are also greatly appreciated."—Leola B. Ham, Sponsor, Troupe 468, Earlville, Iowa, High School.

"The Thespian Society has come to mean much to all of us, and we feel it is a great honor to be members."—Ruth Madden and Glenda Boyd of Troupe 383, Montrose, Colorado, High School.

ORCHID OF THE MONTH

TO ELSIE B. BALL, Sponsor of Troupe 21, Ben Davis High School, Indianapolis, our orchid of the month. Mrs. Ball, who is leaving the teaching profession at the close of school this spring, has sponsored Troupe 21 since it was chartered on May 1, 1938. She has been most faithful to our organization and an inspirational leader, not only in her own school, but throughout her state and nation. She and her troupe were recently honored by having the privilege of installing and initiating Troupe 1492, Emmerich Manual Training High School, Indianapolis, at our Indiana Conference. With this installation all eight public high schools of Indianapolis are now affiliated with our society.

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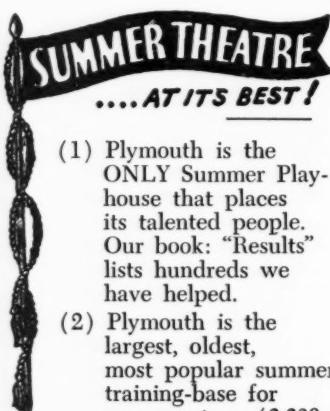
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In this Issue

BRIEF AS THE article may be, it is a privilege to include in this issue, *The Stage Crew - Star of the Show*, authored by Virnelle Jones, Sponsor, Troupe 413, Shawnee-Mission High School, Merriam, Kansas. As a former director of high school plays, I know that efficient stage crews really make the show. Whenever I have the opportunity to add a little glamor for these young people who work so hard in an unglamorous job, I shall seize upon it immediately. Well done, stage crew of *Brigadoon*.

CHARLES R. TRUMBO, Sponsor of Troupe 728, Bartow, Florida, contributes a brief biography of Colley Cibber, another great English actor and playwright. The interesting feature of Mr. Trumbo's article is that he stresses incidents which occurred to Colley Cibber during his boyhood rather than those of his notable achievements in the English theatre.

WILLIAM JOHNSON concludes his series of articles on original programs for radio, television and motion pictures with his excellent article, *Let's Make a Movie*. He states, "and so let's make a movie whether you produce a history of your school or a dramatization of a play or even a slide film on *How to Bake a Cake!* You'll be making a start and after that you'll never want to quit." Making movies of secondary school activities is becoming more popular as each year passes by. Let your drama department be the first to get in on the ground floor.

WE CERTAINLY all agree that variety in play selection over a period of two or three years is good for secondary school theatre. Were I a patron I would soon become tired of secondary school theatre if I had to view the same kind of plays year after year. In his article, *Don't Overlook Variety*, Robert O. Wise, Jr., Director of Drama and Sponsor of Troupe 192 at Keokuk, Iowa, Senior High School, explains the importance of planning your theatre program for several years in advance. He stresses variety in play selection.

LEO ZITRONE, whom I met in Paris, France, several years ago, has contributed a superb article about the International Drama Festivals which will be held in Lyons and Paris this summer. You who will visit France this summer are indeed fortunate to have this opportunity to observe, shall we say, the theatre of the world. Mr. Zitrone, who is in charge of the dramatic criticism at the Foreign Service of the French Radio, will be our French Correspondent for the coming year.

JEAN DONAHEY, National Councilor and Sponsor of Troupe 187, Brownsville, Pennsylvania, High School, contributes an excellent article this month. With such a fascinating title as *How Does Your Props Room Grow?* she offers excellent suggestions for accumulating antiques, furniture, costumes, etc. A well stocked props room will enable a school to present a variety of plays. If your props room is mostly nil, why don't you follow Miss Donahey's suggestions?

ROBERT W. ENSLEY concludes his series with his fine article, *First Nights*. He recommends to all sponsors the value of pre-planning for the first performance. He berates those sponsors who ignore technical details and backstage routines until the opening performance. Unless we follow his suggestions, our plays will always be just "typical high school plays."

ARTUR H. BALLET with his article, *The American Theatre to World War I*, brings to a conclusion his series of articles on theatre. He tells us about the vaudeville and melodramas; he includes both plays and outstanding actors of that period. Here is another thumbnail sketch of theatre which should prove very helpful to students and drama directors everywhere.

FRIEDA REED in her final article on Children's Theatre this year adopts an unusual and interesting format. Instead of using quotations from faculty sponsors and other adults, she has Thespian students write their impressions of and participation in theatre for children. I welcome this approach for two reasons: first, our Thespian students have the opportunity to express their own opinions; and, secondly, their opinions answer affirmatively the hackneyed, but persistent, challenge that high school students do not enjoy doing Children's Theatre.

FIVE PLAYS instead of four are included this month in Dr. Blank's Department, *Plays of the Month*; Si Mills again presents inside information of certain radio and television programs; Paul Myers takes us into Broadway's legitimate and movie theatres; Willard Friederich *brief views* the latest plays and books. To all of our department editors thank you for a job well done.

FOR THE 1955-56 season DRAMATICS will again publish three series of articles on the following general subjects: *History of Theatre since 1914* by Arthur H. Ballet, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis; *Directing the High School Play* by Delwin Dusenberry, University of Florida, Gainesville; and *Costuming the High School Play* by Charles R. Trumbo, Sponsor, Troupe 728, Bartow, Florida.

In addition, articles already contracted for are *Religious Drama* by Collins J. Bell; *A High School Shakespearean Festival* by Bill Bassett; *An Annual Thespian Week* by Roi Hopkins; *Is There a Play Doctor in the House?* by Alfred K. Allen; *Drama: A Vitalized Assembly Program* by Frances Bowyer; *Plays You Applaud*

by Eleanor Theek. Additional articles and pictures of our forthcoming National Dramatic Arts Conference scheduled for the week of June 18, 1956, at Indiana University will be featured throughout the school year. Our Best Thespians will be honored as in the past, and every effort will be expended to include more pictures of the activities of our affiliated schools.

Frieda Reed, Editor of our *Children's Theatre Department*; Dr. Earl Blank, Editor of our *Plays of the Month*; and Willard Friederich, Editor of *Brief Views*, will be on the job throughout 1955-1956. Broadway Theatre and traveling road companies of the commercial theatre will be listed. Our constructive criticisms of movies, radio and television will be continued throughout the coming season by our own Cincinnati staff members. Our Thespians will continue to *Chatter* away.

We believe we are scheduling an interesting reading program for the eight months of DRAMATICS during 1955-1956. We shall continue to bring to all our readers the best of the secondary school theatre, which is indeed the dedicated aim set up by our founders way back in 1929.

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BEN LIGHT, Director of Admissions

HE THAT feels not himself the passion he would raise, will talk to a sleeping audience." This was said by the actor Colley Cibber in the early part of the eighteenth century.

Cibber was born in London, England, on November 6, 1671, on Southampton Street. At the age of ten he was sent to the Free School of Grantham in Lincolnshire where he remained until he had completed his course of study. He had what he himself terms as a "giddy negligence," and remembered having once been whipped for a theme he had written, while at the same time the teacher told him that "what was good of it" was better than any boy's in the class.

While Colley Cibber was growing up in England, it was a sort of school-doctrine or policy to regard the king as a deity. Charles II was on the throne at the time and was loved by all the common people for his affable and easy manner of conversing. He died in February, 1865. Since he was the only king whom Colley had ever seen, his death made a strong impression on him.

The king was long remembered for his idle amusement of playing with his dogs. Colley had once seen him feeding his ducks in St. James' Park. Colley also recalled being carried by his father to the chapel in Whitehall at which place he saw the king and his royal brother, the then Duke of York, in their royal stall where they sat during the entire church service.

King Charles' death was judged by Colley's schoolmaster as a proper subject to lead the class into a more formal kind of class assignment. The schoolmaster requested that each boy in the class make the king's funeral oration. Although all the other boys resolved to decline this honor, Colley set roundly to work and built his oration around the single topic of the king's warmth and affability. Colley raised the king's humility and love of those who served him to such heights that he blamed his death to the shock the king had received when he was in-

formed of Lord Arlington's serious illness. Such was the very childish notion that Colley had of the king's character.

The next morning in class the other boys acknowledged their inability to complete the assignment. Colley then delivered his oration which so pleased the teacher that he set him at the head of his class. This honor was dearly bought, for he spent many uncomfortable weeks among his schoolmates. He was jeered at, laughed at, and hated as one who had betrayed the whole class and few, if any, of them would accept him in their company. However, his oration so far advanced him in the master's favor that he would often take Colley from school for horseback rides while the other students

from the confined life of a schoolboy. On the same day he took the post back to London that he might arrive in time to see a play before his mother demanded an account of his traveling expenses.

It was about this time that he first discovered his inclination for the stage, which he did not dare reveal. Since he knew that the theatre would not be acceptable to his father, he had no other choice at that time except to bow to the wishes of his father.

Colley Cibber never did attend college. He served for a time in the armed forces under the Earl of Devonshire during the revolution in England in 1688. Not receiving a commission in the army at the end of hostilities, he returned to

COLLEY CIBBER

by CHARLES R. TRUMBO

were left to their lessons. Such envied privileges did not increase Colley's popularity with his classmates.

Soon after this event, on the 23rd of April, the coronation day of the new king, the school petitioned the master for a special holiday to which petition he agreed, provided one of the boys would produce an English ode for the occasion. The writing of the ode was assigned to Colley, which he completed in about a half hour. It was not much more than the merry style of a jingle, yet bad as it was, it served its purpose in obtaining a special school holiday. Colley's vanity of his achievement so disgusted his classmates that they left him out of the party he had most wanted to attend. However, their ingratitude served only to increase his vanity, and he considered them as being only so many jealous individuals.

About the year 1687 Colley was taken from school to stand at the election of children into Winchester College. After the election the moment he was informed that he was one of the unsuccessful candidates, he blest himself to think what a happy reprieve he had received

London with the determination to go on the stage, let Father and Mother take it as they please.

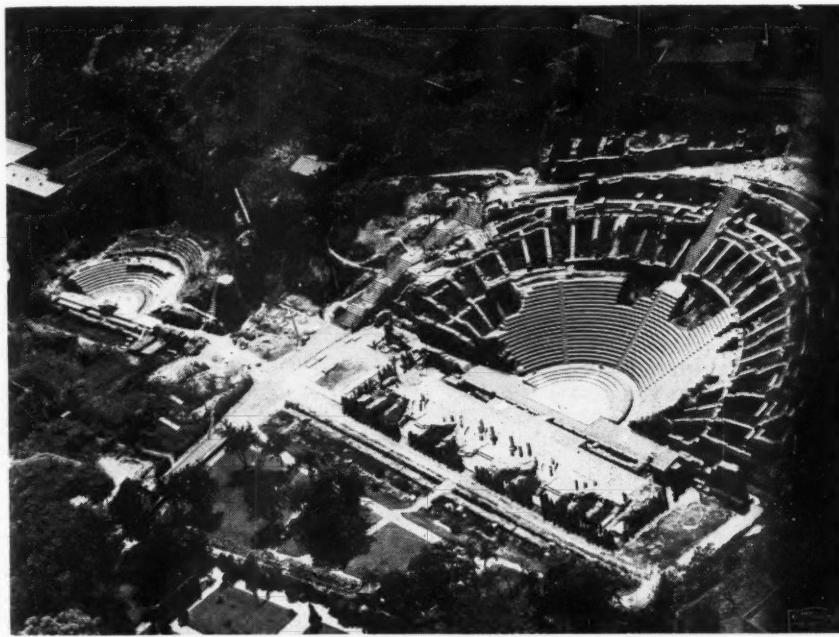
Colley began his career as an actor with Thomas Betterton's company at Drury Lane in 1690, but soon turned to playwriting as well. His first comedy was *Love's Last Shift; or, The Fool in Fashion*. Then came the delightful *She Would and She Would Not; or, The Kind Imposter*, which was followed with his best play, *The Careless Husband*, written for Mrs. Oldfield and himself.

During the course of the next thirty years Cibber was an actor and manager at the Haymarket and at Drury Lane, but these years were a period of complicated lawsuits and a constant turnover in personnel. The only peaceful element was the complete good humor, tact and friendliness of Cibber who refused to allow anyone to quarrel with him. He always bowed and lifted his hat to his opponents, even though they refused to speak to him. In the end all disputes were usually settled in favor of Colley.

In 1730 he was appointed Poet Laureate of England.



Newly installed Troupe 165, Fuller H. S., Little Rock, Ark., Rube Puterbaugh, Sponsor. (Mr. Puterbaugh and Mr. Fair, Principal of Fuller H. S., are included in photo.)



A view of the two ancient theatres so aptly described by Mr. Zitrone.

IMAGINE a big industrial city with nearly a million and a half inhabitants if you include the suburbs. Imagine the difficulties for supplying this town with food, during the enemy occupation from 1941 to 1945. To meet this emergency the local authorities decided to cultivate every square foot of land around the city. This city is none other than Lyons, the third French town, and world capital for the silk industry with 125,000 families working for it.

The poorer of these families lived on the Fourviere slope: Fourviere is one of the two mountains that dominate Lyons. And one day in 1943, while ploughing up the mountain side, a sensational discovery was made. Not digging very deep, the Lyonnese found the remains of two magnificent Roman theatres lying side by side. In spite of the hunger that menaced the city, the archeologists moved in and took over from the ploughers: in France culture comes before agriculture.

As the digging went deeper, they found that the two theatres had been miraculously well preserved. They were two relics dating back from the first century before Jesus Christ. It was Julius Caesar who had ordered these two theatres to be built. Certainly, two thousand years ago, Lyons was already a very important city, then called Lugdunum. In his commentaries on the Gallic wars, Caesar mentions it more than once. Lugdunum was situated exactly on the cross roads of the great Roman routes stretching from Spain to Germany, and from Rome itself to Flanders and the northern seas. Every year a very big fair took place in Lugdunum, and the performances given in the two theatres, attracted great masses of spectators. The larger of the two held—and still holds—5000 people. The smaller, which is called

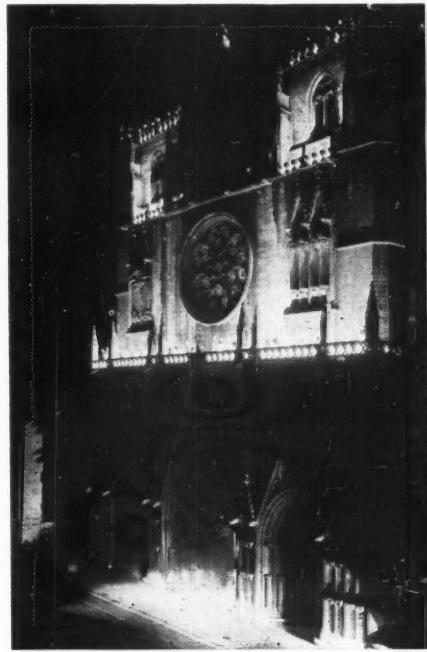
"Odeon," some 2000. Unfortunately, no documents concerning these two theatres have been found up to now, so we can't say for sure what were the exact roles these two theatres played.

It was not long before the two theatres were restored. In spite of the 2000 years that had elapsed, there were not many reparations to be made; only a few thousand dollars were needed to put the theatres back into shape. This was done in 1948, and one year later the city of Lyons had already organized its first "international dramatic and musical festival," all under the direction of the brilliant Claude Pappas, one of our leading publicity men.

France: World Theatre Center

by LEON ZITRONE

Each year the festival now takes place in June-July. Imagine a hot midsummer night; you are sitting on one of the stone steps where Romans and Gauls sat clad in flowing togas many, many years ago. Looking down, over and beyond the stage, you see the modern city lights going out one by one. Above you, stretching into infinity, the midnight blue, powdered with myriads of tiny stars. If you are in the smaller theatre, you will be listening to music. When Karl Munchinger, the famous orchestra leader of the "Stuttgart Kammerorchester," who by the way is now established in the United States, paid his first visit to the "Odeon," it was at night. He



The historic St. Jean's Cathedral, Lyons, France, as lighted during the Lyons Festival.

simply wanted to take a look at the Roman excavations. And standing on the stage, he was suddenly seized by the grandeur of the place. Pointing to the sky and then to the auditorium, he simply uttered two words: "Here, Bach." And he himself, offered his services to the festival organizers. Thus, in 1951 and 1952, he gave a complete program of Bach's Brandenburg Concertos; they were unforgettable evenings. Generally, theatres of 2000 seats are not ideal for chamber music. But the acoustics are so extraordinary, and nights so pure, that I can promise you that never had music been so moving. I remember the light summer dresses glowing in the darkness. Many nationalities were there, from all over Europe, many parts of North and South America, Asia—from all over the world, people flock to Lyons every year. This year 50,000 spectators are expected, 10,000 more than last year, and 20,000 more than 2 years ago, as the living conditions in Lyons are first rate, which means cheap and good, and facilities offered to visitors are very wide, for instance plenty of excursions during the day.

The larger theatre with its 5000 places is wonderfully suited to large scale productions and spectacular "mise en scène." I feel sure that one of Cecil B. de Mille's ancestors must have used the stage . . . it allows room for hundreds of actors to be moved around easily. In, for example, the religious drama, *Joan of Arc*, by Charles Peguy, Joan's journey from prison to the stake is shown exactly as it took place in reality. Joan stands, immobile, chained to a post on an enormous cart loaded with hay, drawn by bulls. Before and behind the cart, there

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Don't Overlook Variety

by ROBERT O. WISE, JR.

THE DIRECTOR OF high school drama spends much time in selecting a play for production. He employs many criteria in making his choice: the availability of actors for the roles, proper stage equipment for the play, trained crews for construction of the scenery, royalty to suit the budget, and the suitability of the play for high school production. The director may become so involved with the individual play choice that he forgets the total theatre season. This mistake might reduce the size and quality of his audience.

Parents of the actors assure the high school theatre of a fairly constant patronage, but variety in play selection will build an audience of theatre patrons. In too many high schools the audience sees one family comedy after another; or at the best, one comedy after another. If the director alternates the types of plays done, does plays in different settings, varies the size of the cast, or does a costume play, the season will gain variety; and the audience will come to see a play, not just to patronize the Thespian troupe.

The primary consideration in selecting any play, even before thinking of variety, is to select a play of quality. Many directors think the only plays they and their actors can handle are those written specifically for high school. Most of these plays with their hackneyed plots and stereotyped characters bore the audience. The difficulty of the production is increased by trying to bring to life a play that would defy the tal-

ents of professional actors. Why not let the playwright do most of the work? Use a well-written play. Following a good play with a bad one will not give variety.

With plays of quality, the high school theatre will serve its fullest educational and entertainment functions if the play selection is well planned. The cast, crews, director, and audience will profit immeasurably by the experiences that come with a season that has variety. They will learn of the different methods a playwright can use to convey an idea; they will understand the human characterizations that are presented differently in the various types of plays; and they will grow through the experiences with the different styles of production.

More concrete results are discernible. A play that is actually different and is not just a re-doing of a former play with a new coat of paint on the set, stimulates the audience. The actors, as do the crews, grow in ability and appreciation of drama by experience with different types of plays. The director benefits from the freshness that invades his theatre, and the feeling that one is a part of a theatre and is not just putting on another class play is contagious to all. The reasons are many, and the methods are easy—there is every incentive for making variety an asset in the theatre season.

The basic method of gaining variety lies in varying the type of drama done. The dramatic season, or successive seasons, should be planned so as to present some comedy, melodrama, serious drama, farce, fantasy, children's theatre, and perhaps even some musical plays.

Comedy is probably the mainstay of high school theatre, but varying the type of comedy done can give a degree of variety. Family comedies, such as *And Came the Spring* and *Junior Miss* that feature the escapades of adolescents vary extensively in situation with comedies about adults like *My Sister*



Jack Price and Gerri Girt as the Clown and Peggy in *Goodbye to the Clown*, Troupe 1391, Elizabeth, Pa., Forward H. S., Dorothy Kogelman, Sponsor.

Eileen or *The Curious Savage*. Farces seeking a laugh at any cost, like *Arsenic and Old Lace* and *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, differ considerably from comedies of thought and the warmth of the human heart, like *Harvey* or *The Hasty Heart*. Comedy-fantasy—*On Borrowed Time* or *Heaven Can Wait* are good examples—will add a different touch to the season.

A melodrama provides variety in a run of comedies. Melodramas are not beyond the capabilities of the same actors who play broad comedy. An actor who can carry Jonathan in *Arsenic and Old Lace* can easily do Sir Lawrence Wargrave in *Ten Little Indians*. Melodrama and farce actually differ in objective only; the techniques are the same. Farce uses any technique to gain a laugh while melodrama does the same to obtain a thrill. A good melodrama like *Uncle Harry* or *Nine Girls* will give spice to the season.

Serious drama makes a welcome change in the year's fare, and high school students are capable of doing it if the program has been building properly. A comedy-fed audience is most receptive to a heavier play. Events in the community, or the calendar date, might provide an opportunity for such a play. *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* would be most appropriate for February, and a religious drama like the *Family Portrait* would fit nicely into the Lenten season. One high school in a small Iowa town did *Our Town* during the community's centennial celebration. Such opportunities are not necessary though; the play itself is enough reason for production.

A relatively new type of drama that is both similar and different from the above types is children's theatre. This fascinating medium can be used for variation in the program, and at the

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An Arena setting for *The Late Christopher Bean*, Troupe 1202, Santa Barbara, Calif., H. S., Charles Metten, Sponsor. (Lloyd Corliss, Tech. Dir.)

WITH APOLOGIES to Mother Goose we ask: "Thespians, Thespians, how does your Props room grow? With lots of chairs and many tables, with suits and gowns all in a row? If it does not, then you are the Contrary Ones, you know!" Did I hear you say that you have no place for one? Then my suggestion to you is to get busy and make, beg, borrow, but get one now! Become a collector; it's real fun. Is there an unused spot under one of the stairways? Block it off with masonite and some scrap lumber. If there is no spot in your building that you can appropriate, have you ever thought of one of the elementary schools nearby? Very often if you explain your needs to the principal and the custodian they can

did not meet with our approval, we still have the sofa and have used it many times. In fact it has been recovered twice since then to fit our needs. During the production of *Little Women* we needed a grandfather's clock. With a large wall clock discarded from the elementary school and three dollars and forty-five cents worth of masonite and scrap lumber our shop achieved a fine replica. One of the boys took the discarded works home to his father, who liked to tinker with old clocks that are worn out. The final result was a clock that really worked on cue.

The local furniture stores help us too. Damaged items will be sold to us at less than cost. The scars can be covered well enough for our needs, but would

How Does Your Props Room Grow?

by JEAN E. DONAHEY

suggest a spot. The next step is to get the consent of the Supervising Principal and the Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds, or chairman of that committee of the School Board. Once this consent to have the place or space for storage has been secured, begin to collect.

Fall or Spring house cleaning time will help you. Offer to take all the discarded furniture, lamps, etc., that the Thespian Mothers would relegate to the "junk man." Picture frames, old hats and old clothes—the "white elephants" of others—can become your collection. The things that you cannot use you can give to the junk man yourself or hold an old-fashioned "rummage sale" on a Friday after school and Saturday, and earn some funds to buy the things you want for the next production.

The boys in the school shop make excellent stage crew members. They enjoy making new tops for old tables, strengthening wobbly legs for chairs. The cost is time and a few cents for lumber, wire or cretonne. That box set you have always wanted can become a reality with the help of the shop instructor. They can build the frames and you can cover them, to give the new stagehands experience before the first show of the season gets under way. The girls too will find plenty to do helping re-upholster the sofa and chairs.

We acquired an antique love seat and five chairs that had been stored in an old barn for the cost of hauling them to our Props room. The younger members of the family were not interested in that old junk of grandmother's, and were happy to get it out of the way. When our troupe did the pictures that illustrated the Rufus Jarman article, *The Heck with Broadway*, in the SATURDAY EVENING POST several years ago we had a letter from an antique collector in Rome, Georgia, who wanted to buy the sofa that was pictured. Since the price

not be usable in anything other than the second hand store and even then their shop men would have to do the repairing.

Keep an inventory of your equipment. You will be surprised at the speed with which your collection of tables and chairs increases. The local window trimmer in one of our women's shops gives us his discarded props after they are



Take Care of My Little Girl, Troupe 1389, Elk Grove, Calif., Union H. S., George H. Nemetz, Sponsor.

used for two seasons. The owner of the store suggested that the high school be consulted to see if we had any use for their trimmings after they were through using them. As a result we have a wonderful set of cork "Stone" walls, plaster Grecian Pillars, Balsa Palm Trees, Boxwood trees, etc., in addition to seasonal garlands, flowers, trellis, and drapery material. In fact the same store trimmer often assists the local Optimist group "dress" or stage their annual Minstrel show. We furnish the stage crew for this and other town productions.

After the first drive for props through your Dramatics Club and Thespian mem-

bers, the next step is a feature article for the local press. Make it in connection with the introduction of the costume play you are producing. The attics and storage trunks are a treasure-house that will open to you, especially if you give complimentary tickets to the play to the folk who will lend or give you costumes for *Little Women*, *Little Men*, or *The Importance of Being Earnest*. A costume collection is as necessary as a furniture one. When you have your own, you are free from the worry involved with the use of borrowed items, to say nothing of the headaches, and the expense with the "rental" problem.

Of course a cedar lined cupboard would be heavenly, but jumbo plastic garment bags on a large homemade wood and pipe rack will serve the purpose at one side of the Props room until you can afford to get the cupboard built in. A discarded dresser or old trunk will hold many things in order for you. Orange crates nailed together are an inexpensive wall file for small dishes, vases, hand props and hats.

In addition to our collection of period costumes from the attics of our friends and neighbors, we have acquired the habit of attending the rummage sales in search for men's things. This way we acquired a full dress outfit and a tuxedo coat. Others have come to us from wives who want to know if we have use for an old style dress suit or tuxedo that is too small for Dad, and Junior just will not be caught in the same room with it, but it really is too good to throw away. The same holds true for lodge uniforms, old army clothes; with the insignia removed the Templars frock coat has many uses. The same thing applies to discarded band uniforms too.

Our Local Women's Dress shop has helped us inestimably, by calling us the day before a sale on evening gowns and permitting us to take our choice of the shop worn or soiled evening gowns at five or ten dollars each. We buy the wide skirted gowns in satin or taffeta in colors that will blend with lighting effects. You certainly cannot buy eight yards of Skinner satin for five or ten dollars anywhere else. Then we make other costumes from them as we need them. Occasionally we buy net gowns and use the skirts for veiling. Often we use them as they are for the fading or soiled creases do not show in the front row. Full skirted housecoats made of cotton over hoops make ideal costumes because of the ease of laundering. We have purchased ten of these and use them for rehearsals with the hoops that we secured at reduced cost because we ordered six of them.

Our hoops have appeared in more weddings than plays, and their rental has paid for their cost to us. In the past seven years we have spent about two hundred dollars on costumes and have presented ten costume productions in

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IT LOOKED as though both the hero and the heroine of the Western movie were doomed. They were surrounded completely by angry Redmen. One of the little boys in the front row sniffed, "If he had kept his eye on the Indians instead of the girl, this never would have happened."

The "Indians" in the case of a director are those technical details and backstage routines that should have been taken care of a long time before the opening performance. Strange as it may seem, many shows give the appearance that the director never planned that there was going to be a first night. If this seems like an overstatement, quiz one of your friends who is in the show, in case you are not, as to the activities backstage two hours before curtain time. Mind you we're not talking about the natural excitement and tension that accompanies every first night from Broadway on down. We're talking about the nature of the activities. Does there seem to be purpose in the actions? Are things well organized? Do the stagehands, property people, electricians appear to know what they are attempting to do? Is the stage alive with the actors trying to peek through the curtains, or under it, to see if George really brought Melba or whether Dad really got the night off? If there is a strong affirmative answer to most of these questions, it is the

HIGH SCHOOL THEATRE

FIRST NIGHTS

by ROBERT W. ENSLEY

to beat them for over a year." So it is with a show. Only you're not trying to beat an opponent. You're trying to beat the accusation that is leveled against so many amateur performances: that the curtain didn't open when scheduled; that there were long waits between scenes; that there were a number of the cast who kept running in and out of the auditorium before and during the performance; that the ushers were nearer to ornaments than aides for courteous seating of the patrons; and so on, and so on.

If only a director would realize that had he planned for the performance far enough in advance so that his backstage organization had become routine, he would have done much toward achieving a smoothly running technical production. This is conducive to a good performance by the actors. A carefully or-

Let us take a look backstage at what should be common practice on the night of performance. Suppose that the performance begins at 8 p. m. At 7 p. m., or earlier depending on the complexity of the make-up, all the actors in the first act should be in their dressing rooms. This assumes that during dress rehearsals the cast has been assigned to specific quarters, they have a specified place to dress, and have previously agreed on what the make-up is going to be. At the same time the crews are setting the scenery for the first act. Even in the case of the one-set show, the protective cloths will have to be removed from the furniture, and the furniture moved into place. The props that are on stage will have to be set, and the prop table off stage will need to be organized. The stage manager or his assistant should see that all other people are kept off stage. No lights should be on except the worklights.

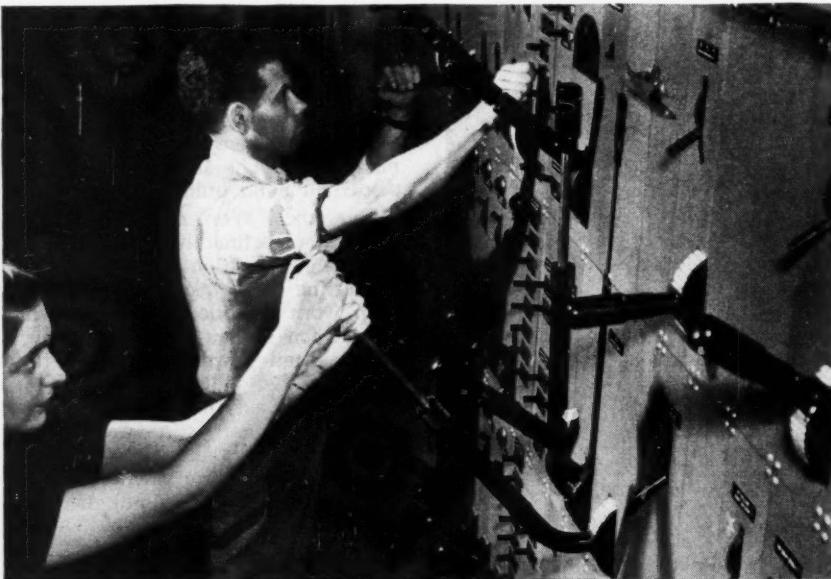
At 7:30 p. m. the assistant stage manager will notify everyone that there's a "Half hour to go." At 7:45, he calls, "Fifteen minutes." Then the stage manager should check up on all the properties on the stage. At 7:55, he calls, "Act I," at which time all of the actors should come to the stage and make a definite report to the assistant stage manager that they are there. If there is a convenient spot for such a list, it is helpful for each actor to initial his name as he comes in. There should also be a place on the list to indicate that he left, and where, in case he had to leave for a forgotten tie after once reporting in. Such a practice can save a lot of footwork, but better, can save time and confusion by knowing where the actor is without quizzing everyone in sight. By this time too the entire cast should be on the premises, whether they are in the first act or not. Once a show begins the stage managers have enough to keep them busy without additional checking to see if everyone is on deck.

At 7:55 p. m., the stage manager should give the warning signal to the auditorium or lobby that Act I is to begin. This can be done by varying means. Some schools use a bell similar to a town-crier's. Others dim the lights a couple of times. In the event there are no dimmers on the house circuit the electrician could snap off and on one of the circuits to indicate the warning. It doesn't much matter what the device is so long as it is used and becomes a symbol of the action to follow.

The electrician is also given the cue to light the stage. The actors take their places at the command of the stage manager. The prompter, if there is one, takes her place. On the stroke of 8 p. m. the house lights are dimmed or taken out, the stage manager pulls the curtain or has the one appointed to do so, the play begins.

Perhaps it would be well at this point to mention a couple of practices that are

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The light crew of Indiana, Pa., State Teachers College, practices "curtain procedure" by dimming the house lights while bringing up the stage lights.

height of illusion for a director to believe that he planned well in advance for the opening performance.

Several years ago when the Army football team journeyed out to the University of Michigan and beat them, many people were congratulating Red Blaik for the fine job he had done that fall. Blaik's answer must have been quite puzzling to many people. Said he, "I didn't beat them this fall. I beat them last year. I have been planning how

ganized and smoothly running stage not only saves long waits between acts and unfortunate mishaps during the course of the play, but also has an excellent effect on the actors. It puts confidence and stability into them, whereas confusion behind the scenes makes them more nervous, excitable, and uncertain. And were this all that it accomplished, which it isn't, it would still be more than worth the effort and forethought it takes to achieve it.



The "Professor" of an original movie,
Professor Diddlewit's Ectoplasm.

IN ALL the previous articles of this series, I have described radio and television projects which have been successfully done by student groups and which you can do with limited equipment, untrained student performers, and a minimum of teacher supervision. But in this final article and project, let us both be a bit more daring and lavish. Let's write and produce a movie!

You may still use student actors and technicians, although a little more preparation will be needed. Your instructor's supervision will be helpful, although not absolutely necessary. The equipment you will need is an 8 or 16 millimeter movie camera with a focusing lens, a tape recorder, and a few editing tools like a pair of rewinds and a film splicer. Most of the difficult steps—such as putting the sound on film and printing-in the optical transitions—can be performed by the professional laboratory which "processes" your film.

This is a project dear to my heart, not only because I work professionally in this field, but because I know you can have a great deal of exciting fun producing a film. And, then too, the film itself will be a permanent record of your achievement. Years later you will be able to view it with pride and learn from the mistakes you made.

Also, there is reason to believe that in the future films will be produced in ever-increasing numbers by high schools and colleges. You can get in on the ground floor of the development if you get "into the act" now.

Many schools are trying to get a program on television. May I suggest that a film is the easiest way? Not only does a film give the TV station more opportunities for scheduling, but it saves the expense of studio and camera rehearsals. The advantages to the school also are worth considering. First, flubs and miscues are positively eliminated. Secondly, you are able to sit back and watch a filmed show and criticize your own performance. Finally, your film tells the station what kind of live performance

you can do, so it is likely to lead to a TV invitation.

In addition to these reasons for making a movie, you should consider the tremendous impact of motion pictures on our daily lives. Not only as an educational tool and a teaching aid, but on television and in the movie theatre, does the film influence our thinking and behavior patterns. This influence promises to grow stronger as time goes on.

We are told that an electronic camera, which records both picture and sound on magnetic tape, is only a few years away from the mass production stage. This camera will do for film-making what the tape recorder has done for sound recording.

Furthermore, even if you should not be in a position to "tool up" for film production at this time, your acquaintance with the production process will help you understand and appreciate what you see and hear on the screen. And so, in this article I should like to give you a "blow by blow" description of how a movie is written and produced. Naturally, it cannot be the complete story. For that I refer you to Spottiswoode's book, *Film and Its Technique*, the definitive book on film production.

Let me say to begin with that the moving picture form has two basic ingredients. They are ingenuity and the willingness to experiment. These qualities—with which some film-makers are born and others must acquire—have built the movie from literally nothing to the magnificent instrument for education,

ORIGINAL MOVIES

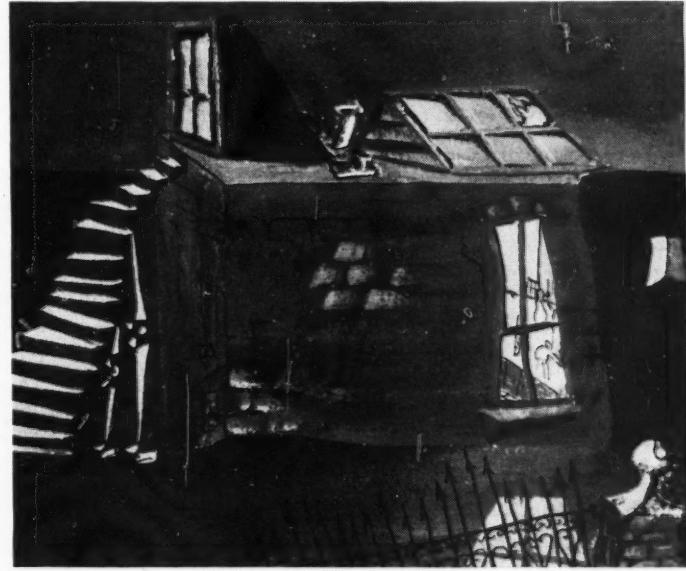
Let's Make a Movie

by WILLIAM JOHNSON

rector friend of mine. As a lad of 14, he read in the newspaper about a marvelous engineering achievement, a device which translated sound impulses into an oscillating beam of light. It had been built specially for the Chicago World's Fair.

Intrigued by the idea, this lad wired an old microphone in series with his pocket flashlight, and—wonder of wonders—the thing worked beautifully. It translated the sound of his voice into an intermittent beam of light. And so, with modest pride, he carried his little gadget in his pocket when he attended the Fair and demonstrated it for the flabbergasted engineers, whose device had cost thousands of dollars and was so heavy a man couldn't lift it.

Of course, this gadget has little relation to making movies (that I know of), but it serves to illustrate the kind of experimenting that pays big rewards when applied to film production. Today, much wiser and more experienced, yet



Professor Diddlewit's Laboratory.

information, and entertainment it is today. Standard procedures like the "match" dissolve, the "mat-printing" process, the elaborate "wipes" and trick camera effects so common today were mere notions in the heads of young experimenters a few years ago.

To describe what I mean by ingenuity, let me tell you about an inspired di-

with the same fresh approach to every problem, my friend is a professional film director. He is called upon to muster up the kind of ingenuity referred to above on the average once a day—and handle the multitude of routine duties that go with his job too! As a neophyte, however, you shouldn't be scared away by

(Continued on page 26)

HAVING established itself as a free and independent nation by the end of 1812, the United States began in earnest a tremendous geographic and industrial expansion, which has not yet concluded. During this time the theatre in one form or another has been a popular entertainer for all of the people. Wherever they went, the theatre followed, bringing lusty laughter or sentimental tears with it. If the playwrights were not always first rate and if the actors were flamboyant and what we might call today "hammy," they nonetheless supplied their audiences with what they wanted. The legitimate stage was then a healthy, brawling baby; as it matured, it brought forth new off-

America's favorite entertainment, it gradually lost ground by lowering its own standards, by the monotony of seeing again and again the same acts, and by the encroachments of the movies and radio, which not only stole most of vaudeville's best entertainers, but provided vaudeville with its most serious competition. Today, except for night-clubs and a few motion picture houses, vaudeville is a lost art. As the old performer who knew so well how to please an in-person audience died or retired to more lucrative areas, there have been few to replace them.

But the legitimate theatre continued to flourish through these years. Dominated by acting talent, the living drama

been adapted by George L. Aiken from Harriet Beecher Stowe's famous novel. The three hundred nights it played in New York were only a small indication of the tremendous popularity this play had in America not only before but long after the Civil War. Versions of it were still playing the far west after the turn of the century; as a musical, as a double-cast (two Topsy, two Eva), as a super-spectacle featuring the "crossing of the ice" and the "ascent of Eva scenes, and as a pure melodrama, the play seems to have bewitched the nation. Similarly, *Camille* was translated from the French and succeeded in drawing profuse tears from urban and frontier audiences alike. Still another melodrama deserves attention, if only because of the great number of performances it had everywhere. *East Lynne* (1863) by Mrs. Henry Wood played in every hamlet and way-station in America, until the slogan, stemming from signs posted everywhere one went, "East Lynne tonight," came to symbolize the height of melodrama. Americans seem indeed to have been prone to shedding "good, healthy tears" over synthetic concoctions.

American supremacy in the musical comedy field also made itself felt at this time. *The Black Crook* opened in New York in 1866 and created a scandal with its exposure of feminine pulchritude. Women, if they dared go at all, came in veils, while ministers thundered against the production from their pulpits, but the show played for 475 performances and was the great-grandfather of the Follies, the Vanities, the Scandals, and our modern Broadway reviews. Not until *Oklahoma*, many years later, was there any serious or permanent change

The American Theatre to World War I

by ARTHUR H. BALLET

spring to supply the popular tastes: minstrel shows, vaudeville, motion pictures, radio, and now television.

The first of these quite American entertainments was probably the minstrel show. For some time there had been vestiges of Negro rhythms and acts in the variety shows, but it was Thomas Rice (1806-1860) who deserves credit for popularizing the minstrel show with its interlocutor, its end men, and its wonderful pseudo-Negro ballads and dances. The minstrel show took America and England by storm and was for a time the most popular of all entertainments with troupes travelling all over the United States and its outlying territories, amusing loggers, gold miners, farmers, and city sophisticates alike.

Another entertainment which achieved phenomenal success was the vaudeville show. Originally nothing more than a nineteenth century French variety show, it took on special aspects in America. At first a group of performing acrobats, jugglers, singers, and comics did their off-color routines for the lower middle classes. After the Civil War vaudeville came of age under Tony Pastor, who, by 1865, had cleaned up the programs and the performers so that women and children could attend without fear of being offended. B. F. Keith and F. F. Proctor built theatres across the nation to house and to popularize the vaudeville show. Great dramatic and musical stars, imported from abroad and the legitimate stage, performed with seal acts, popular singers, and acrobats. The material was scrupulously clean, and for a time the level of production and performance amazingly high. The mecca of vaudeville became the Palace Theatre in New York, a show place to which every act aspired. Some of the most significant names in the production area of American entertainment founded their dynasties in vaudeville including Marcus Loew (MGM) and B. F. Keith (RKO). Once

became an increasingly robust activity. Typical of the age was the extremely popular actress, Charlotte Cushman (1816-1876); originally an opera star, she turned to the theatre when she lost her voice and became the first American woman to attain real fame on the stage. Her stately bearing and dignified approach to a role, as well as her still fine voice, made her a distinguished actress. Another graceful performer with an equally famed voice was Anna Cora Mowatt (1819-1870), who also gained fame for her very well written play, *Fashion; or, Life in New York* (1845). Miss Mowatt's leading man on several occasions was E. L. Davenport (1816-1877), an intelligent and almost sweet Hamlet and an accomplished performer, as well as the founder of a respected American theatrical family.

It was, however, the son of another American acting family who reached the pinnacle. This was the immortal Edwin Booth (1833-1893). The son of the famous actor, he undoubtedly deserves the right to be called America's greatest actor. A distinguished tragedian, it is doubtful if there has ever been his equal as *Hamlet*, which played for 100 performances in New York, an unprecedented run. With his brothers, Junius Brutus, Jr., and John Wilkes, Lincoln's assassin, he formed the best known acting family; audiences in 1864 were indeed treated when they saw the three brothers in *Julius Caesar* on the stage at once. Although Edwin retired from the stage when national sentiment temporarily rose against the family name after John Wilkes had killed Lincoln, Edwin came back to the theatre in 1869 to build and star in the magnificent Booth Theatre in New York. His name today stands for the very finest tradition in the American theatre.

By far the most popular play in the United States at the time of course was *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which in 1852, had



I Remember Mama, Troupe 254, B. M. C. Durfee H. S., Fall River, Mass., Barbara Wellington, Sponsor.

in either the format or the content of the musical comedy from that which had been established in *The Black Crook*.

Whether all of this activity in the non-dramatic theatre was the result of the poor playwriting or the cause of it is of course unknown, but the fact remains that the drama itself was undistinguished. Dion Boucicault (1822-1890), an Irish-born dramatist who came to this country early, translated and wrote on his own a great number of plays. Most of them, like the famous *The Sidewalks of New York* (1857), were little more than melodrama abounding in topical allusions and spectacular scenes, such as a house burning on stage with firemen actually extinguishing it before the audience's eyes nightly. Only his *The Octo-noon* (1859), dealing sensibly with the negro as it does, seems really worthy of a place in the theatre's history. Augustin Daly (1838-1899) achieved fame with what was intended as a serious study of local color but stands today as a fine example of melodrama, *Under the Gaslight* (1867), including as it does the famous scene with the hero tied to the railroad tracks. He and Boucicault were rivals, but history seems to have accorded Daly the nod, for he not only was a distinguished entrepreneur and theatrical manager in America and England, but he encouraged a fine writer, Bronson Howard (1850-1908). Writing strictly native drama, Howard achieved distinction with *Saratoga* (1870) and his most popular play, *Shenandoah* (1888), which dealt with the Civil War. Steele Mac-Kaye (1842-1894) was a respected director and writer, who, in building the Madison Square Theatre with its elevator stage and overhead lighting, showed considerable foresight. James A. Herne (1839-1901) was a moralist through-and-through; while his intention of improving his audiences was laudable, it is unfortunate that he chose melodrama with which to do it. Nonetheless, in a play like *Margaret Fleming* (1890), he shows the strong influence the French and English realists had on him.

Among the actors, Joe Jefferson (1829-1905) was the most universally beloved. Although he played expertly in a wide range of roles, he was primarily remembered as Rip Van Winkle, which he toured most of his life. Far different was William Gillette (1855-1937), who as playwright-actor, became famous in mysterious cloak-and-dagger thrillers like *Secret Service* (1896) and *Sherlock Holmes* (1899). The age in fact was the Age of the American Actor. Lawrence Barrett, Marlowe and Sothern, Lotta Crabtree (whose Little Nell will probably never be forgiven or forgotten), the glamorous (to our grandparents) Lillian Russell, the comedy stars Weber and Fields, William Faversham, the romantic James O'Neill (father of the playwright), and Otis Skinner were but a very few of the stars of the palmy days of the American Theatre. Richard Mans-

field (1857-1907) deserves special mention for he not only created the highly popular roles of *Beau Brummel* in Clyde Fitch's play of 1890 and the title role in *Cyrano de Bergerac* in 1898, but he was instrumental in popularizing both Ibsen and George Bernard Shaw in this country. The Drew-Barrymore family also deserves a niche, but we have room here for only its most brilliant son, John. In his short career John Barrymore managed to achieve singularly as a powerful actor, rivaling even the mighty Booth as Hamlet.

David Belasco (1854-1931) was not himself an actor, but as a playwright and a director-producer, he was prolific in not only the number of plays he brought forth but in the long list of stars he created ranging from Mrs. Carter and Blanche Bates to George Arliss and David Warfield, and including among others Frances Starr, Mary Pickford, Lillian Gish, Henry Hull, and Ernest Truex. In addition, he undertook to adapt Antoine's methods to the American stage with almost devastatingly realistic results. Unfortunately the painstaking attention to detail was wasted on highly romantic melodramas at their most saccharine sweet.

Only two outstanding writers remain: Augustus Thomas (1857-1934) produced plays dealing primarily with American themes, the most famous of which was *The Copperhead*, which, in 1918, starred Lionel Barrymore. Clyde Fitch (1865-1909) was the first important American writer of social comedy. Employing the devices of the well-made play, he contributed good dialogue and was able to

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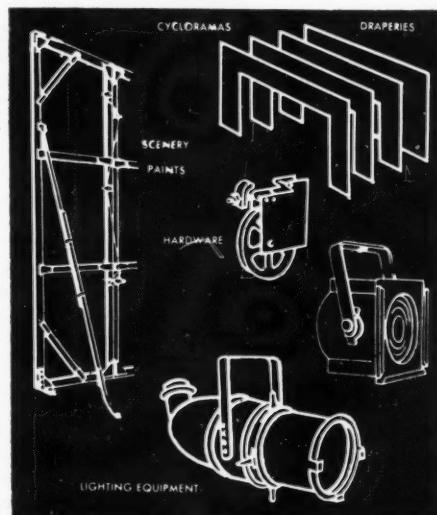
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achieve some sure-fire dramatic effects on the stage. Not the least of his accomplishments was the introduction of the cowboy into the theatre with *The Cowboy and the Lady* in 1899 and his *Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines* (1901), which brought stardom to another Barrymore: Ethel.

With the social comedy of Clyde Fitch, the American drama completed its incubation period. A war soon faced the young nation, and out of that war and the one that followed, the United States was to come out undefeated and a world leader. The theatre of the period from these wars to the present day constitutes "modern" American theatre, a subject which shall be discussed in another series dealing with the theatre in DRAMATICS during the coming school year.



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NO AUDIENCE LIKE A CHILD AUDIENCE

(Editor's Note: In recent articles in this column, a number of our sponsors have given us their reactions to work with Children's Theatre. This time, Thespian members themselves—actors and technicians—are recapturing the thrill of experiencing *Audience Response*.)

CURTAIN TIME

(Richard Mazza, Troupe 1000, Upper Darby Senior High School)

"Curtain time draws near. A few late comers rush to find seats close to the stage, and a few run to find out whether the balcony is filled. And then,—it is curtain time, and as the house lights go down, the previous drone of mumbling young voices rises into a Vesuvian eruption of excited clamor. But—finally, the house is dark; the noise subsides to hushed expectancy; and the curtain opens on a world of magic and fantasy where nothing is impossible and dreams come true. This is Children's Theatre whether with *Simple Simon* in Upper Darby, or with *The Clown Who Ran Away* in Carlisle, Pa., or *Little Red Riding Hood*, in Wayne, Michigan, or *Aladdin* or *Cinderella* or *The Panda and the Spy* in Lubbock, Texas."

THE AUDIENCE PARTICIPATES

(Johnnie Costopoulos, Vice-President, Troupe 214, Carlisle, Pa.)

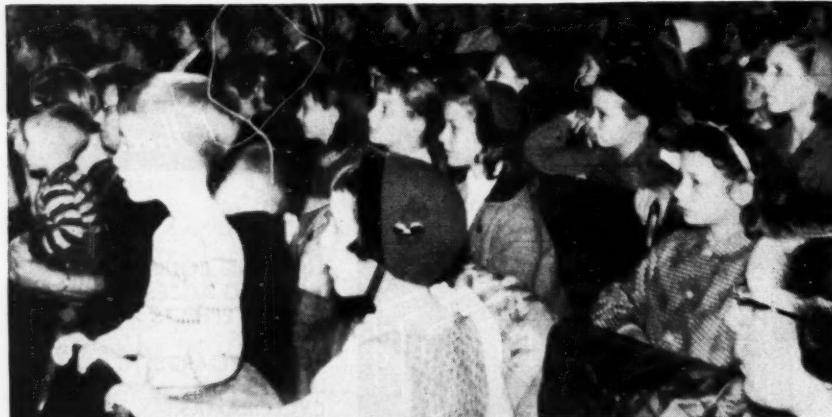
"Yea! Boo! No! Yes! More!" were shouts that raised the roof of the Carlisle High School auditorium as the children numbering about 500 thrilled to the ad-



youngsters, nothing could be more silly, especially when they could listen to the magic dolls (Helen Kollas, Nancy Swartz, Diane Bolze, Joyce Lear, and Jackie Freeman) who performed simple dances and sang songs like *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*. The juvenile audience thought, 'They just can't be beat.'

"When Dodo became attached to the magic flirting doll (Jackie Freeman), he just had to find a way to get a million dollars to pay the price of Mr. Frumpkins, the best dollmaker in all the world! (Leon McGinnis). Dodo pleaded with the audience to help him reach his goal. Shouts went up as red-faced, flustered children yelled, 'I got three cents' or 'I gotta dime!' One boy felt he had to help Dodo, no matter how! No, it wasn't a bullet that whizzed by Dodo's head at that moment, but only a boy's last nickel that landed right at Dodo's feet.

"Who but children would have clung to their seats for dear life as Gary Chronister and Dick Raudabaugh enacted the roles of the terrible robbers who came to steal Mr. Frumpkin's dolls.



This audience, which recently attended Troupe 1000's production of *Simple Simon*, proves certainly that "there is no audience like a child audience."

venture of the *Clown Who Ran Away*, presented by Troupe 214, on December 9.

Tears filled the eyes of the children holding their sides with laughter as they watched disgusted Dodo try to erect a cardboard tree. (Incidentally, it was during the performance that the tree unexpectedly broke—not purposely!) Biting of fingernails began and curious eyes watched while little minds sympathized pityingly, 'Poor Dodo!' The truth of it was 'Poor Johnnie Costopoulos!'

"Teenagers and adults swoon to the voice of Eddie Fisher and get all hepped up over Tex Bennet's band. To the

Dodo, asleep under the cardboard tree, was constantly watched by all the boys and girls who kept wishing Dodo would get up and catch the robbers. But when Dodo slept on, impatience seized the audience as they began to call, 'Dodo, wake up! Please wake up.'

"Gladys, the writing horse (David Swartz and Dick Burkholder), stole the hearts of all Trigger fans as they watched breathlessly every nod and every step Gladys performed. As the performance was drawing to a close, Gladys galloped up the aisles, making her exit. The children wildly shouted to their parents, 'I wanna pet her!'

(Note: The CT Editor wishes to thank the Thespian sponsors and members who have cooperated so enthusiastically and intelligently in making this Column your department. Next year we hope to hear from many more!)

"Since the first children's play, *Many Moons* in 1952, *Once Upon a Clothesline*, 1953, and *The Clown Who Ran Away*, 1954, Thespians of Troupe 214 declare, 'There's no audience like children.'

CHILDREN RELIVE THE PLAYS IN CREATIVE ACTIVITY

(Carol Chedester, Troupe 670, Wayne Memorial H. S., Wayne, Michigan)

"For our annual Children's Theatre presentation, the Wayne Memorial High School Thespian Troupe 670, in connection with the University of Michigan Women's Association, sponsored by Mrs. Letha Rice, chose *Little Red Riding Hood*.

"We began rehearsals the third week in December, working Saturdays on the stage sets. They consisted of the outside of Red Riding Hood's house, the Old Wolf's cave, and the inside of Grandmother's house. The results of seven weeks' work were completely rewarding. The combination of costumes, lighting, and scenery provided for the children's audience a very real wonderland.

"The play was presented at three local elementary schools during regular class hours. Children watched transfixed as the curtains parted to reveal a little pink and brown-trimmed cottage in the woods, with Old Wolf in her grimacing mask reclining in front of the door. They uttered many 'Ooh's' and 'Oh's', and a few of the younger ones, 'Look at the wolf!' In their concern for the safety of Grandmother and Red Riding Hood, when the wolf was hiding behind a tree, they pointed and shouted to the woodcutters, 'There he is!' The five-and six-year-olds were most appreciative, but the second, third, and fourth graders were nearly as impressed.

"Pictures drawn later by first graders indicated that they were most impressed with Grandmother, and of course Young and Old Wolf. Many of the children, when told to draw their favorite scene, came up with some surprisingly accurate and detailed pictures. Even the bricks, which we used to raise the bed to make room for the hiding wolf, appeared in one of the drawings, a clear indication that six-year-olds are close and keen observers and worthy of the best and most authentic presentation that can be given them.

"This play was not intended as a money-making one. Half of the proceeds went to the U. of M. Women's Association for scholarships, and our portion went toward a fund that we have to send Thespians to the annual spring conference.

"We feel that any time we were released from regular school duties for this activity was more than justified, not only by the valuable experience that we gain-

The recent death of Charlotte B. Chorpenning has thrown her work into new perspective. Her teachings, her plays, her philosophies have influenced every producer of plays for children in this country, and many abroad. For years to come, we shall all be feeling her full impact.

Her one text-book is therefore especially valuable to us now. Only in the last year of her life did she finish it. It is a summary of her fertile years in writing and producing plays for children. It was her creed.

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by Charlotte B. Chorpenning

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ed in producing the play but also more importantly by the satisfaction that we high-school students received in knowing that we were stimulating the imagination and training the taste of many children."

CHILDREN RESPOND TO THE MAGIC OF FANTASY

(Liz Creson, Troupe 240, Lubbock Senior High School, Lubbock, Texas)

"The houselights dim! The curtain opens! The Penguin Players of Lubbock Senior High School, Lubbock, Texas, are again presenting a Children's Theatre production in their school auditorium. It is one of the three plays presented during the fall semester each year, before some 1500 to 2000 boys and girls from Lubbock's 27 elementary schools.

"A small child is carried away into the magical land of fantasy. The young children, however, are not the only ones who enjoy the magic story that is being unfolded on the stage. The adult escorts, more often than not, return to their own childhood and find themselves caught up in the suspense of the story.

"The actors are high-school students who are enjoying the experience to the fullest. When one of the young audience offers to help find Aladdin's lost lamp, the young Thespians know that they are truly bringing enjoyment to the youngsters out front . . . When the Fairy Godmother in *Cinderella* transforms the heroine's tattered rags into a beautiful gown, lines on the stage are drowned by the 'Oh's' and 'Ah's' from the credul-

ous audience. The Godmother, however, silences the children by telling them that her charms will not work unless it is very, very quiet. Stillness settles over the auditorium.

"The children like action in their plays and are entranced with the title characters in *The Panda and the Spy*. Although neither the panda nor the spy speaks a single line throughout the entire production, each one draws more response from the uninhibited audience than any of the other characters. In the final act when the panda successfully captures the sinister spy, wild cheers rise from the excited audience. Some of their young faces mirror relief, but most of them reveal the excitement induced by the love of adventure experienced by all youngsters.

"Two elements that add greatly to evoking response from the young playgoer are proper lighting and colorful costumes. The children particularly liked the costumes in *Alice in Wonderland*. The story of Alice was a little complex for the youngest members of the audience, but the vivid costumes held their interest and attention.

"The children will not allow sloppy presentation. The most obscure 'fluff' does not escape their careful observation. The actors must be capable of transporting themselves into a world of fantasy in order to take their audience with them. And, above all things, the children must be able to hear the actors, or they may become restless and inattentive. Action must be broad and ges-

tures must be decisive. Children must not be expected to project themselves into the mood of the play; their reactions must be artistically inspired. The actor *must* forget himself; for the duration of the play, he must *be* the character he is portraying.

"Despite the fact that the youngsters demand so much of the actors, they, like no other audience, will respond gratifyingly to the authentic presentation of their favorite stories. Their responsiveness is like electricity shocking the actor into doing his best to bring reality to their world of fantasy . . . And, so the curtain closes! The houselights come up! A high school Thespian can look into the glowing face of a little girl, alive with the radiance of dreams, and he knows then that the endless hours of work were not wasted but an enviable opportunity provided to bring happiness to someone else rather than glory to himself.

"And so once again these young critics—the children—have demanded the best: action filled with descriptive pantomime, authentic sets, beautiful costumes, and a presentation as nearly perfect as possible. Lubbock High School's Penguin Players have been presenting these plays for seven years, and this group has benefited from this project more than they can adequately tell. Yes, the Penguin Players, along with sincere high-school producers of Children's Theatre across the Nation, are truly training the audiences of the future; and the young audiences, at the same time, are helping to mold the actors of tomorrow."

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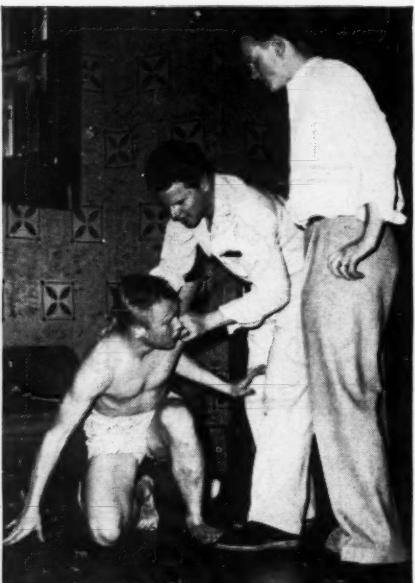


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TIGER HOUSE

Shawnee-Mission High School, Merriam, Kans.

A SURVEY of the interests of drama students at Shawnee-Mission High School, suburban Kansas City, Kansas, revealed that mystery plays were most in demand. As good mysteries for amateur productions are hard to find, one must often take an old favorite of several decades past and stage it to meet the elaborate wishes and expectations of modern youth.

Last year the Dramatics Department of Shawnee-Mission revived a show which had first been staged here seventeen years ago. And in 1954 *Tiger House*, by Robert St. Clair, proved to be as great a hit as it was in 1937. Of course many things were changed from the original staging, but the student body and the physical plant of the school had also changed greatly. The enrollment of 2600 students was four times greater than that of the pre-war years. The entire auditorium, stage, and lighting system had been remodeled several times until now it enabled as elaborate a production as one desired. Scenery had taken the place of the cyclorama stage settings, and a complete new set for *Tiger House* was designed and constructed so that this show could be complete in every detail and be a challenge for all of us who were striving for perfection.

The plot of *Tiger House* is simple: Erma Lowrie, a young shop girl, has inherited Mystery Manor from her eccentric aunt, and must occupy the house for one year. Strange forces and super-natural happenings centering around a tiger necklace hidden in the library fail to make her give up her inheritance. A phantom tiger, compelled to regain possession of the necklace, is at last discovered to be a hoax, but the suspense of the play is never lost.

The ten characters comprising the cast offer excellent opportunities for diverse acting. But the cast members are not the real stars of this show. This is one of those rare productions whose success is determined by the coordinated effort of cast and crew, and no one can be said to be the lead. The 25 students who hand painted over 150 tiger heads and 300 mammoth tiger feet which covered the mile of corridors in our building and converged upon the caged tiger cub who was watching the ticket sales; the students who threw the rain coats into the showers; the dancers who worked out "Hold That Tiger" as a publicity stunt; the ushers who donned tiger heads, black skirts or slacks, and orange tunics to set the mood of the play; the stage crew who spent over 1250 man-hours constructing the set of grey walls with 558 hand-painted wall-paper designs and thousands of inches of sponged "pussy feet"; the students who rolled the thunder, flashed the lightning, worked the sound effects—this was their show too. They knew that whatever their job was, they played as leading a role as did Erma Lowrie with her 450 speeches.

Just why do we look upon this show as one of our biggest hits? As a director, I find it so because those who worked on it never tired of endless efforts to give their best. Never had they worked so hard and yet had so much fun while doing so. To the cast and crew, the unique staging and acting opportunities were foremost in importance: the bookcase which quietly swung open to allow a frightened and miserable bug chaser to hurtle through; a fireplace with false backing which enabled the tiger to grab his victim in the presence of the awed audience and snatch him into the darkness; the eyes and lamp in a portrait above the mantle which lit up to warn of another tiger attack; the lightning and thunder, the wind and rain which set the sinister atmosphere. And the audi-

PLAYS OF THE MONTH <i>Edited By EARL BLANK</i>
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ence felt it a success for they had come for an evening of thrills and suspense flecked with a little comedy, pathos, and romance. They were not disappointed for one could have easily increased the blood pressure of any unsuspecting victim by merely tapping him on the shoulder during a tense scene. To everyone, this was the show of shows.

Finding it quite difficult to destroy a set which was the last material reminder of our hit of last spring, we decided this fall to present the sequel of the original tiger play and the senior class began rehearsals with *The Phantom Tiger*. However, we feared that this show could never live up to the reputation its predecessor had earned. But we were wrong. For many of us, it even surpassed the thrills of *Tiger House*. Over 1500 patrons attended the production and many acclaimed it "the best show ever." The plot, although complete in itself, continued where *Tiger House* had stopped. The spirit of the deceased aunt roamed the stage and terrified the audience. This was done effectively by using a single ultra-violet bulb in a reflector which the actress held before her. The fight between the villain and the tiger, although done in complete darkness with only Aunt Sylvia's glowing green face looking on, and the tiger's ferocious growls which were finally made inaudible by the shrieks of the entire audience, highlighted this production. A complete new cast had been selected, and although the scenery was ready, the stage crew and technical staffs had their hands full.

Today we have only the memories of two shows well done—but if we listen carefully as we pass through the empty and darkened auditorium where the tiger once lurked, we can still hear echoes of our screaming, mystified audience.

The set has since been changed into a medieval palace and soon will take on a much gayer look when it is used for *'Twas the Night before Christmas*. But we of the dramatics department can always look back to our days with the Phantom Tiger and know that each of us fully lived up to the motto: "Act Well Your Part; There All The Honor Lies."

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THE BARRETT'S

Catholic Girls' High School, Los Angeles, Calif.

OURS is a speaker's stage only! And our primarily teen-aged audience demands, almost exclusively, rollicking comedy. Therefore to try to "get away" with a presentation of Marjorie Carleton's sedate adaptation of *The Barretts* was indeed a challenging adventure. During first rehearsals, I felt the need of finding a way to introduce this serious play to our comedy-loving audience. So I chose three typical high school girls to represent an introductory skit in the comic vein. They feared that the contrast between skit tone and play tone might be too much for the audience. But they bravely stepped out before each curtain to explain to indifferent "Sally Senior" that romance in 1845 was little different from what it is in 1954! Then for the scene of Elizabeth's reverie in her "new" room, we contrived a dim-out so that an impressionistic dance sequence with one boy and three girls might be spotted up. This experiment went well until the dress rehearsal of 1850 costumes! The costumers provided a little too much tightness in the boy's jacket, and, to avoid its splitting he almost dropped his partner in our dream-effect adagio! Now we worried about rental fees for useless lights and dimmer if our dance interpretation of Elizabeth's desire for youth and health should not turn out to be a fitting adjunct to the *Barrett* theme.

Some variation was needed for Act II now. When poet Robert Browning opened a window, the receding song of the flower vendor from the street was made audible to the audience. The "Finale" too needed an impressionistic

touch. The dimout on stubbornly dejected Father Barrett might be climaxed by a spot on an old fashioned costumed singer. Her song was to be a musical arrangement of Elizabeth's sonnet, "How Do I Love Thee."

Some of the audience assured us that the skit indeed helped them to understand the play! Surely the dance was the beauty spot. Its symbolic meaning carried over even to the fine point of the exchange of the tight fitting jacket for Browning's flowing outer cape. "Professional" was the adjective which passed so many lips in praise of our leading lady, (Anne Haering). Father Barrett, despite his villainous role, was taken with his "big, manly" voice right into the hearts of the audience. Yet some original-minded audience member suggested an Oscar for a very unself-conscious performer, Elizabeth's faithful Flush—in real life the pet of her maid, Wilson (Shirley Alexander).

SISTER M. CONSILIA, I.A.M.,
Sponsor, Troupe 361

TWO ON AN ISLAND

Ensley High School, Birmingham, Alabama

STAGING AN eleven scene play was a novel experience for Thespian Troupe 258. *Two on an Island* produced a sensation and aroused theatrical interest at Ensley High School.

Several lines and parts of scenes had to be omitted and modified in this stirring epic of a young man and woman seeking happiness and success in New York City, in order to be suitable for a high school audience.

A different set was necessary for each of the eleven scenes. Many problems arose as to where to put the scenery when it was not in use. Our stage is very small, with almost no storage space backstage. This problem was solved by painting some scenery on the back of other sets.

The first scene takes place at Grand Central Station, and the second, on a sightseeing bus. Such a complete change



Charley's Aunt, Troupe 1001, Cathedral H. S., Duluth, Minn. Sister Rose Marie, O.S.B., Sponsor.

of scenery would have been extremely difficult in a short time, so in the first scene we used only two taxicabs and a backdrop of the skyline of New York, suggested by the author in the production note. For the second scene the taxicabs were turned around, revealing a sightseeing bus on the other side.

Only a few of the forty roles are long, the rest being very short. The size of the cast and the variety of the roles give ample opportunity for excellent acting.

Although there is a school orchestra, records providing mood music were more effective.

Ever since Alabama's Regional Director, Florence Pass, has been sponsor of Troupe 258, it has been our policy to try to produce plays which have never been presented on the stage in Alabama. *Two on an Island* was introduced to Alabama through our production, thereby bringing a new type of play to the high school theatre of our state.

PEGGY BAKER,
Vice-President, Troupe 258

CHARLEY'S AUNT

Cathedral Senior High School, Duluth, Minn.

STRAIGHT FROM the shoulder and right from the heart, you did a beautiful job last Friday night . . . No kidding, it was a delight to watch! There were subtle actions that some of you used which fitted perfectly into the picture. You could probably notice that yourselves in the reactions of the audience . . . I was especially pleased to note the way you all waited for the audience . . . I heard many good comments . . . Did you stagehands realize that you changed scenery for the second act in three minutes flat? That's speed! The music, too, at both the chases could not have been better. I almost felt like running myself, and when the audience feels that way, then you know that the play is really being lived."

(Continued on page 25)



Two on an Island, Troupe 258, Ensley H. S., Birmingham, Ala., Florence Pass, Sponsor.



By PAUL MYERS

READERS OF this page will have guessed before this that I am partial to what Variety calls "filmusicals." One of the best of recent months is Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's *Love Me or Leave Me*. This is a biography of Ruth Etting, the star of Broadway musicals of the 20's and early 30's. Stories of backstage life tend to conform to the accepted pattern of the unknown who, through thick and thin, holds to the great ambition of achieving stardom. There is some of this in *Love Me or Leave Me*, but it is not the dominant note of the film.

Miss Etting started as a hostess in a Chicago dance hall and became a Ziegfeld star. Her rise to stardom was, however, a rather sordid story. She was involved with some of the criminal element that made Chicago a byword for lawlessness. It was necessary for Miss Etting to go along with some of this racketeering, and the film makes this point.

The score of the film is chock-full of some of the best remembered tunes of that era: "You Made Me Love You," "Ten Cents a Dance," "My Blue Heaven" are some of them. Doris Day, who plays the leading role, does a grand job in putting these numbers across with some attempt to re-create the style of Ruth Etting. Her lyrical passages are fine, but her histrionics are not on the same level. William Cagney plays the gunman who helped Miss Etting on her way to fame and who she eventually married. He does a fine job. *Love Me or Leave Me* is in Cinemascope.

Nat Holt, the Western specialist, has produced *Rage at Dawn* for release through RKO Radio Pictures. It is a superior Western—one that abounds in action but maintains suspense and credibility. The film is set in the frontier towns of Indiana just after the Civil War. The Reno gang has been terrorizing the citizenry with robbery and murder. Randolph Scott plays James Barlow, a secret agent who is sent out from the Peterson Detective Agency to round up the gang and the corrupt politicians who are protecting them. I do not need to relate that justice triumphs, but the incidents that befall our hero before this takes place hold one's interest. *Rage at Dawn* was directed by Tim Whelan from a screenplay by Horace McCoy.

Recent filmgoing has included a rather interesting Italian juvenile being released in the United States by Carroll Pictures. The film is *Princess Cinderella*—made in Italy with dubbed English dialogue. The film purports to relate what befell Cinderella after she married Prince Charming. Since her sisters had kept her in

the kitchen, she is not accustomed to court life and spends most of her time in the palace kitchens making delicious royal casseroles. One day—just before a royal function of importance—the wicked sisters drip candle wax into Cinderella's famous slippers so that she cannot get them on her wee feet. When the King and the Queen discover her at the gala in her bedroom slippers, she is banished from the court. How she is rescued from the wicked ogre and restored to Prince Charming is the story of the balance of the film.

Technically the film is not on a par with recent Italian production. The dubbing, in particular, is very poorly done. The idea, however, is such a clever one that children (and many adults) should find *Princess Cinderella* pleasurable. Sergio Tofano directed the film and Muriel Levor directed the English version. The score was composed by Renzo Rossellini.

I had an interesting chat with a Japanese film producer the other afternoon, who has just brought a film about the atom bomb explosion over Hiroshima to this country. He told me that the most popular films in Japan today are those made during the War in America about the Japanese phase of World War II. The most recent of these is *Escape to Burma*, which Benedict E. Bogeaus has produced for RKO.

Barbara Stanwyck plays Gwen Moore, a white teak plantation owner in Burma. Her life is a lonely one until Jim Brecon (played by Robert Ryan) makes his way to her isolated jungle home. Brecon is a wanted man—accused of the murder of the son of the local Sawbwa. Eventually Jim clears his name and is free to marry Gwen, but they have a hard time of it in a chase through the jungle. *Escape to Burma* is adapted from a story which appeared in Colliers, *Bow Tamey to Me*, by Kenneth Perkins.

One of the most pleasant films I have seen is *Marty*—a Hecht-Lancaster production being released through United Artists. Some of you may have become acquainted with Paddy Chayefsky's Bronx butcher through the television screen. Mr. Chayefsky has transplanted *Marty* to the cinema magnificently.

All of Marty's brothers and sisters are married, and he lives in the family home with his mother. Everyone keeps telling him that he should find a nice girl and get married—his relatives, his pals, his customers. He is a genial guy, makes a good living, but just can't seem to meet the girl and pop the question. One day he meets Clara, a teacher. She is in a similar lack-of-marital status. Their decision to get married causes a crisis.

Ernest Borgnine (best remembered as the sadistic sergeant in *From Here to Eternity*) is wonderful in the title role. Betsy Blair plays Clara. Esther Minciotti, the Italian character actress, plays Marty's mother. *Marty* has been directed by Delbert Mann and is an unforgettable movie.



By PAUL MYERS

THE 1954/55 New York Theatre season is ending up in a show of strength. Several of the recent arrivals have drawn almost unanimous critical praise, and the ticket purchasing public is crowding toward the box office. One of the chief contenders for the major drama awards will be William Inge's *Bus Stop*, which has set up shop at the Music Box. It was at this charming West 45th Street theatre that Mr. Inge's previous hit, *Picnic*, played.

In *Bus Stop* Inge relates the serio-comic events in the lives of a group of people at a roadside diner. Mr. Inge has demonstrated in his earlier plays his gift for depicting the little things in the lives of little people which make these people most effective dramatic creations. They are concerned with the same things that concern each one of us on the auditorium side of the proscenium, yet—through Inge's artistry—they are more vulnerable than most of us can be. That is the great merit in *Bus Stop*—as it was in *Picnic* and in *Come Back, Little Sheba*. Kim Stanley, who was so outstanding in *Picnic*, figures prominently in the cast. Others who turn in good performances are Elaine Stritch, Anthony Ross and Albert Salmi. Harold Clurman directed the work.

Many of you recall Garbo and Melvyn Douglas in a delightful film, *Ninotchka*. This was the story of the Russian girl who comes to realize some of the joys of our Western culture. From Melchior Lengyel's story, George S. Kaufman and his wife, Leueen MacGrath (assisted by Abe Burrows), have fashioned the book for the new musical at the Imperial Theatre—*Silk Stockings*. The music and lyrics have been composed by Cole Porter, and the musical is the latest hit to be produced by Cy Feuer (who handled the direction) and Ernest Martin.

Conflicting rumors reached us during the try-out performance of *Silk Stockings*, but the production, which bowed on 45th Street, is a big success. Hildegarde Neff plays the Russian lady and Don Ameche is making one of his rare flesh-and-blood appearances in the leading male role.

Maurice Schwartz has returned to Second Avenue, the locale of New York's major Jewish Theatre activity. He is playing a season at the downtown National Theatre of three plays in English. The first of the productions has been *The Grass Is Always Greener*, a comedy by Sholom Aleichem in an English version by Tamara Kahn. The play tells of the experiment on the part of two Russian college students in 1905. Shreourson is a Jewish student; Ivanov a royal Russian. At a party Ivanov tells his Jewish

A PREVIEW OF BAKER'S COMING ATTRACTIONS

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DO NOTHING DAN. A comedy by Wynn Murdoch. 3 m., 5 w. Interior setting. Royalty, \$10.00. Price, 75 cents. They'll laugh all evening at the comedy situations that arise in DO NOTHING DAN. Dan leaves home and settles with his married sister because his father wants him to go to work. When his sister's sister-in-law drops in, Dan's life takes on a new look. It's a gay, carefree play that will please everyone.

MURDER FOR THE BRIDE. A mystery by James Reach. 11 w. Interior setting. Royalty, \$10.00. Price 75 cents. Mystery thrills and excitement make up this power-packed entertainment. A surprise bridal shower which includes a "treasure hunt" for presents ends up in a murder when a thunderstorm causes power failure. From here on the tension mounts until the final hair-raising climax. The characterizations are brilliant and there are good parts for every member of the cast. It's an absorbing mystery that's hard to beat.

BAKER'S



PLAYS

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friend that he makes too much of being of the Jewish faith . . . that the stories of the difficulties he must overcome are too tall . . . that he exaggerates the obstacles he must overcome.

The two students decide to exchange identities. Ivanov seeks lodging in a Jewish home; Shreourson settles down in his friend's quarters. The inevitable takes place—Ivanov falls in love with Betty Shapiro. The evening I attended the production, there seemed to be little fun in the production. *The Grass Is Always Greener* does discuss a very serious problem but it must be played airily

to get it across to the audience and to make its point. Mr. Schwartz and his colleagues played it so heavily that none of the lightness of the play was allowed to percolate through.

The Broadway Chapel Players, who present drama as the vesper service at the Broadway Congregational Church, have just unveiled a new play. This group has previously presented Andre Obey's *Noah* and Christopher Fry's *The Boy with a Cart*. The new play, by William Alexander Percy, is *In April Once*. This is one of those plays that convinces one that it has great significance

and weighty content but is impossible even to begin to assimilate upon first hearing.

Mr. Percy described *In April Once* as: "a dramatic poem about man's search for faith during the Middle Ages; a search which began in the Dark Ages and brought about the Renaissance."

The locale and the style remind one of Fry's *A Sleep of Prisoners*. The play is set in a prison tower near Florence. The unfortunate prisoners represent a synthesis of society: a pirate, a heretic, an out-of-favor courtier. David, the jailer, is a humane fellow with vague yearnings of the need to go on the Quest to the Holy Land. When the prison is deserted by all the other officials, David delights in letting the prisoners out of their cells for a brief respite. He particularly enjoys Guido, the courtier for the Emperor of Palermo, Sicily. One night they even free the heretic who has been pent for years in the lowest of the filthy cells.

The heretic is leprous and near death but has something to die for and therein is happier than any of the others. Through his faith he gives the others something to die for and—even—live for. It is heartening to see such activity being carried on by a church. The presentation of the play every Sunday at 5:00 supplants the regular Vesper Service. The drama has been thrust out of the church for too long. Much credit must go to Bill Penn, the actor who founded the Broadway Chapel Players, and to Dr. Penner, the minister of the church.



Stuart Vaughan, Frances Sternhagen, Dolores Mann, Thomas Carlin, of *Thieves' Carnival*, now at the Cherry Lane Theatre, N. Y. C.



By SI MILLS

Capitol Cloakroom

Columbia Broadcasting System

SENATOR Edwin C. Johnson (D., Colo.), first guest on CBS Radio's *Capitol Cloakroom* and each year's anniversary guest, continued the tradition on the program's sixth anniversary.

"Senator Johnson, do you think there is a need for the draft at this time?" was the first question asked of him who is now a member of the Senate Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee and the Senate Finance Committee.

On the anniversary program questions directed at Senator Johnson probably centered about his views on the administration's tax and farm program and the nation's military preparedness.

Government officials and prominent members in both Houses of Congress have been guests on *Capitol Cloakroom*. On each broadcast three of the network's



Griffing Bancroft, program chairman of CBS Radio's *Capitol Cloakroom*.

Washington correspondents interview the week's guest in the informal manner characteristic of the relaxed atmosphere of the Capitol cloakrooms.

Lewis Shollenberger, CBS Radio Director of Special Events in Washington, produces the program. Griffing Bancroft is chairman.

The Telephone Hour

National Broadcasting Company

RAUDIO LISTENERS throughout the country are treated each week to an incomparable concert hall program at absolutely no cost. Artists whose high fees would make the box office price of these recitals very high are offered without admittance fees each week on NBC's *The Telephone Hour*. The roster of singers and instrumentalists who have ap-



Donald Voorhees, conductor of the Bell Symphonic Orchestra which is featured on NBC Radio's *The Telephone Hour*.

peared on this program since its inception in April of 1940 is a virtual "who's who" of music in America. The first two years of the program had a somewhat different format in that James Melton, tenor, and Frances White, soprano, were featured as regular soloists with the Bell Symphonic Orchestra, conducted by Donald Voorhees.

Starting with the third year of the program, *The Telephone Hour* inaugurated its great artists' series with Jascha Heifetz, the violinist, as the first soloist. This format featuring distinguished guest artists each week with the Bell Symphonic Orchestra, has remained since April, 1942. Three of the artists who were heard during that first season of the great artists' series still appear on the program. They are Jascha Heifetz, Lily Pons, and Marian Anderson. Other distinguished soloists making frequent appearances on the program include Ezio Pinza, Robert Casadesus, Nelson Eddy, Bidu Sayao, Ferruccio Tagliavini, Zino Francescatti, Eileen Farrell, Barbara Gibson, Clifford Curzon, Michael Rabin, Igor Gorin, George London, Jose Iturbi, Jussi Bjoerling, Blanche Thebom, and Mildred Miller.

Other distinguished artists have appeared on the program in the past, whose appearances made radio and musical history. Fritz Kreisler, who had long been a "holdout" against radio appearances, made his debut on the air on this program in 1944. Tagliavini sang on this program for the first time in the United States in 1947, and his wife, Pia Tassinari, the following year.

The Telephone Hour has also done some programs a little off the beaten path of the concert hall by including such artists as Bing Crosby, Tito Guizar, Benny Goodman, and Mary Martin. Miss Martin appeared on the program with Ezio Pinza in a half-hour concert version of their great success, *South Pacific*.

But the basis of this series still remains the weekly concerts of the world's most distinguished singers, violinists and pianists.



By SI MILLS

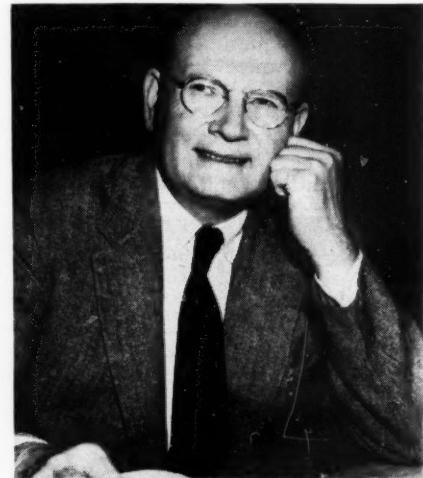
Now and Then

Columbia Broadcasting System

DR. FRANK BAXTER, who guides CBS Television viewers on exciting trips through the world's literary heritage on *Now and Then*, was voted by his students at the University of Southern California, "The Man Who Should Teach Every Class in the University." He calls himself, "A schoolteacher who likes to talk to kids about books."

Dr. Baxter, whose *Shakespeare on TV* series over CBS Television stations KNXT and WCBS-TV has won 10 national and regional awards, brings to the network series an extensive educational background and experience as an instructor. He was graduated *summa cum laude* from the University of Pennsylvania in 1923, later received his M.A. there. He was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy degree by the University of Cambridge in England, where he was a member of Trinity College. He has been associated with the faculties of the University of Pennsylvania, Swarthmore College, and the University of California. He has been Professor of English literature at the University of Southern California since 1930.

Dr. Baxter's Shakespeare lectures on KNXT made up the first course for college credits ever offered on television. Of the thousands of home viewers who followed the lectures, 213 took the term



Dr. Frank C. Baxter of CBS-TV's *Now and Then*.

end examinations for college credit and received grades comparable to the ratings of regularly enrolled U.S.C. students.

Using passages with which his audiences have associated him during his highly-successful *Shakespeare on TV* series, Dr. Baxter makes what he terms "a declaration of faith" about the joys



NBC-TV's "Comedian of the Year," George Gobel, relaxes at home with his children.

and excitement of reading and of books in general.

The flexible format of *Now and Then* which allows the multi-award-winning University of Southern California professor of English to range at will through the great writings of all ages, is designed to recall viewers' acquaintance with selections they have enjoyed previously. It is further designed to remind them that they have a place in and a relation to history, are the heirs of all the excitement of the past, and the participants in events that will become the history of tomorrow.

Dr. Baxter ranges the realm of the written word from the ancient Egyptian *Hymn to the Sun* to Dickens and Browning and on to such contemporaries as Dorothy Parker and Carl Sandburg. He uses such visual aids as models, works of art, maps and manuscripts to bring to life the past and relate it to the present.

The George Gobel Show National Broadcasting Company

NBC-TV comedian George Gobel, who accompanies himself on the guitar for some of his numbers, recalls happily a time when he didn't have to play his own accompaniment. When he was a 12-year-old singer on a Chicago radio program, Gene Autry played Gobel's guitar accompaniment. Gobel still has a recording that proves it.

He was a boy soprano at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, and when the choir was invited to sing on a Chicago radio station broadcast, young George's voice made such a hit that he was signed up for *National Barn Dance* and other programs.

By the time his singing voice changed and his soprano was gone, he was playing small parts in children's weekend programs of Chicago origination over the NBC radio network. He says his roles on the Tom Mix show, for instance, were not very taxing, since they were "sides," such as "I'll hold your horse, Tom."

After high school Gobel sang over radio stations in Chattanooga and St. Louis, until the United States entered World War II. Gobel had been flying since high school days, so he enlisted in the Air Corps, serving first as a pilot, then as a flight instructor. He was a first lieutenant when he received his honorable discharge after the war.

It was during the war that Gobel developed his flair for comedy, continually working up new routines to amuse his fellow fliers. This frank and critical audience proved an ideal testing ground. When Gobel returned to Chicago, he asked agent David O'Malley if his act was good enough for launching a professional career. O'Malley approved — but Gobel claims that O'Malley's real reason for taking him on as a client was that the agent had a last-minute call for a comedy act in Grand Rapids and Gobel had a car.

Gobel, whose comedy act has brought him critical and public acclaim in supper clubs from coast to coast, has been a frequent guest on *Colgate Comedy Hour* and other programs. Soft spoken, he has a serious demeanor which is misleading for the first few seconds. After that, his impish wit makes itself evident.

General Electric Theater Columbia Broadcasting System

RONALD REAGAN appears weekly as on-air program supervisor and periodically as player in the dramatic and musical series, *G. E. Theater*, on CBS Television. Many prominent stars have made their television debuts on this program, among them Gene Tierney, who made her television debut on the premiere program. Miss Tierney played the lead in *Nora*, an adaptation of Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. The program was broadcast live from New York.

The series, originating from New York and Hollywood, presents the works of noted authors, performed by stage,

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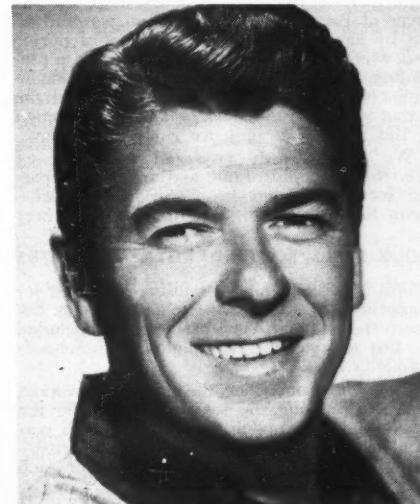
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screen and television luminaries. Among recent works dramatized on the series are: *High Green Wall* by Evelyn Waugh, starring Joseph Cotten; *The Clown*, a biography of Emmett Kelly, with Henry Fonda in the lead role; Paul Vincent Carroll's *The White Steed*, starring Barry Fitzgerald; and *The Face Is Familiar*, starring Jack Benny. Other stars scheduled on the series include Tyrone Power, Joan Crawford, Jane Wyman, Paul Douglas, Thomas Mitchell and Barry Fitzgerald.



Ronald Reagan, host of CBS-TV's *General Electric Theatre*.



Formal Initiation of Troupe 507, Lincoln H. S., Ellwood City, Pa., Marjorie Lostetter, Sponsor.

PITTSBURG, TEXAS

The Curtain Time Club of Pittsburg High School started off by producing our annual Christmas play. This year a student committee chose *Geraldine and the White Robe*, unusual in that it was a play within a play, which gave quite a few students excellent experience in construction of sets, casting, acting, collection of properties, and partial direction of this very successful presentation.

Troupe 1129

scheming against the wicked Heckla. Through the efforts of these impish sprights, the shoemaker's shop was saved and happiness was brought to the village once again.—*Permella Bedford, Reporter*.

WINSLOW, WASHINGTON

Troupe 416 of Bainbridge High School feels very satisfied with its activities during the first half of the school term. We have new officers, now a little worn, and we have produced our

The Thespian Chatter

The next event was the annual Play Festival. The three plays produced were *Women Who Wait*, *Where the Cross Is Made*, and *The Farce of the Worthy Master Pierre Patelin*, which was chosen the best play. The very effective medieval costumes were made of dyed union suits for tights, with tow sack tunics and rope belts. The tights and hoods were dyed to match. For the nun's costumes we borrowed choir robes and improvised headresses from old bed sheets—we got our ideas for styles from pictures in DRAMATICS magazine. This helped to make our play a success and at the same time kept our expenses to a minimum. The curtain was not drawn throughout the entire production and the scenes simply changed as the characters occupied different sections of the stage. Medieval stations were denoted by signs marking the street, draper's shop, and the home of Pierre Patelin. Symbolism was carried out by having the judge wear colors of purple and white and carrying a pair of scales representing justice. The critic judge from Kilgore Junior College felt that the costumes and the acting were very satisfactory in the production of this farce. The audience enjoyed the play.

We have already produced one three-act play this year, *Stag Line*, and are now preparing for the production of *Strictly Formal*.—*Betty Ranson, Scribe*.

SIOUX FALLS, SOUTH DAKOTA Troupe 783

The Elves and the Shoemaker, presented for approximately 6,200 grade school students between the first and second semesters, concluded the first semester for Washington High School's dramatics class.

Throughout one week, the stage crew worked feverishly moving the set to each of the ten grade schools, readying the stage for each performance. The property committee busied themselves preparing the individual props for each actor.

Each child was brought into an imaginary wonderland as he saw the three elves, Widget, Gremlo and Finella, dance about the stage,

pated in the all-school play *Murder in a Nunnery*; our president, Gerald Horn played the inspector of Scotland Yard.

Late in November we invited parents and teachers of the English department to our initiation of new members.

Two of our members went to New York during the Christmas holidays, and between them reported on thirteen shows seen on the "Great White Way."

In January, after a dinner party as the guests of Thespian Jewel Aungst, everyone went to the Studio Theater to see *Sabrina*.

In February most of our Thespians saw the Canadian Players do *St. Joan*.

And now Thespians are taking part in the senior play, *Annie Get Your Gun* (our former "inspector" is now Stage Manager).

There's still Memorial Day and our assembly or so to do and we'll write finis to another fine year for Thespians.—*Dianne Baker, Secretary*.

"AND WE LOVE IT!"

"Why does anybody love the theatre, knowing the drudgery, the disasters, the frustrations, the sleepless nights, the risks of total failure? Well—it depends upon how much of 'the ham' you have in you . . . You remember a strain of music out of the night . . . You hear a few unforgettable lines from a play that will always be one of the truly great . . . You feel that warm surge of emotion when the house lights go down, the music swells, and the curtains open on enchantment! . . . You know the hush of an audience whose heart has been touched, and you hear the sniffles—they're crying! . . . Sometimes they don't laugh when they should, or, even worse, they do when they shouldn't . . . But that's part of the risk, and what was that about 'living dangerously'? . . . That's 'ham', and we love it! . . . That's being hopelessly stage-struck, and it's terrible and wonderful, and 'There's no business like show business!'—by Virginia Wiggins, Sponsor, Troupe 1375, Scio, Ohio, High School, Scio (Ohio) Herald, February 25, 1955.

JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

Troupe 975

Our sponsor, Betty Dowling, was stricken ill with polio early this fall and Mrs. Budd Porter has been taking temporary charge. Our Thespian Troupe sponsors many activities during the year. Among Thespian members we planned a Christmas Pageant; three one-act plays were presented in March: *Borrowed Tails*; *Five for*



When Shakespeare's Ladies Meet, Troupe 486, Earlville, Iowa, H. S., Leola Benda Ham, Sponsor.

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Bad Luck, and a cutting of *Antigone*. We also enter state and local drama festivals with plays and entrées in dramatic readings. This year two of our Thespians won a superior rating in the dramatic reading division at the Florida State Drama Festival.

Thespians also choose the Senior Class Play, which as yet has not been decided upon. We are having a wonderful year in spite of the misfortune of not having Mrs. Dowling with us. We all look forward to each issue of DRAMATICS magazine with pleasure and sincerely appreciate the help and cooperation we receive from it.—Barbara Ehrmann, President.

TIPTON, INDIANA

Troupe 1173

The troupe of National Thespians at Tipton High School now has a total membership of 23. We are very proud of this year's many activities. The Saturday after Thanksgiving, Thespians and the local chapter of the National Honor Society co-sponsored a formal dance. In years past, our school held one dance annually, the Junior-Senior Prom. We Thespians and the National Honor Society, however, decided to sponsor the pre-mentioned Fall Formal, and because of its success, hope to make it an annual affair. Our dance was held in the gym, which was decorated in the "Harvest Moon" theme, and an orchestra was hired for the occasion. We invited neighboring small high schools and had much pleasure in preparing for and participating in our own first annual dance.

Early in February Thespians sponsored, as a money raising activity, a Marionette show for the student body and charged a small admission price.

Five new Thespians were initiated at a semi-formal banquet February 16th, and we wish them a lot of success and happiness as National Thespians.

February seemed to be our big month, as it brought also our Thespian play, *Apple of His Eye*. The play was suited nicely to our group as the setting was a farm house in an

PLAYS OF THE MONTH

(Continued from page 19)

This comment from Mr. Louis Hogan of Superior Central High School was typical of the audience appreciation of our senior class play, *Charley's Aunt*, by Brandon Thomas. As Ella (Georgia Srok) exclaimed, "The audience's reaction was wonderful. It was to us like a refreshing drink of cold water on a hot day. It made us put our hearts into that play; we lived it. When it was all over, we really realized that the most important thing to put into a play is feeling."

Charley's Aunt is a perennial favorite because of the ludicrous situations arising from Babb's forced impersonation of his college chum's aunt. Kitty and Amy have accepted a luncheon invitation to Charley's rooms at Oxford with the understanding that Charley's aunt from Brazil will also be there. Since her arrival was postponed a few hours, Jack Chesney and Charley Wykeham force Babb to be the "aunt." This leads to Babb receiving many naive confidences from the girls, blows from the boys, and proposals from the elderly gentlemen. Finally all the romances shape up right and everyone is happy except poor old Spettigue, still a bachelor.

The play presents no special direction problems because the business is so well indicated in the books. It was necessary for us to eliminate the garden scene and have two acts in the boys' rooms, but the change was comparatively easy.

Brother Roger of Memphis, Tennessee, shared with us a clever touch that he had used in this play. He used the Lone Ranger theme (*Wm. Tell Overture*) as background music during the chase of "Charley's Aunt" off the stage and down through the audience. We copied his idea and got a tremendous reaction in spite of the fact, or maybe because of it, that the record was accidentally played at 78 instead of 45 r.p.m. speed.

A new generation of fans is now echoing, "I'm Charley's aunt from Brazil where the nuts come from."

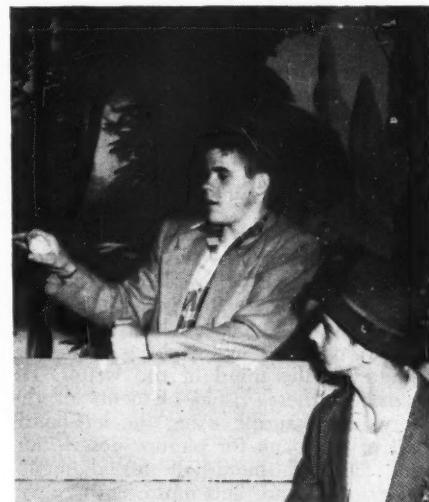
SISTER ROSE MARIE, O.S.B.,
Sponsor, Troupe 1001

THE SILVER WHISTLE

Warren G. Harding Senior High School,
Warren, Ohio

THE SILVER WHISTLE was particularly appropriate for the Silver Anniversary Year, not only because of the title, but also because of the dramatic challenge it presents. It is a mature play, but a bit of editing and underplaying several scenes will satisfy the most fastidious.

Indiana county. The 10 cast members, Juniors and Seniors, enjoyed working together under the capable leadership of our sponsor, John Mark Johns, and a very nice student director. In appreciation to them, the cast and crews presented Mr. Johns a Shaeffer Fine Write fountain pen and white neck scarf. The Student



The Silver Whistle, Troupe 1249, Warren Harding Sr. H. S., Warren, Ohio, Kathleen E. Kelly, Sponsor.

Staging is easy, costuming simple. Omar, the rooster, and the wheel chair present the only properties problems. Omar I, recruited from an obliging farmer, proved of the Barrymore temperament (John, not Ethel). After estranging all the neighbors by his raucous crowing, he finally went berserk—result: mercy killing. However, the bantam Omar II was a real trouper and never missed a cue.

The play is not a farce; it must not be played primarily for laughs. (Though there are plenty). The old people should be portrayed as human beings frustrated by an unsympathetic society. Into St. John's Home for the Aged comes Erwenter, the hobo, who has purloined a rooster—and borrowed a birth certificate to gain entrance. Appalled by "the death-in-life" he finds here, he takes steps to bring renaissance and romance to the inmates. His task is complicated by the intrusion of his fellow-hobo, Emmet, and the romance of The Reverend Watson and Miss Tripp as well as several other complicating factors. Reverend Watson must not appear at a final disadvantage with the loquacious Erwenter or the audience will be unhappy that Watson finally gets the girl. The actor playing Erwenter must be a quick study, for the part is a long one. Mastering, projecting, and maintaining the tones and actions of age require great concentration by all the actors.

The Silver Whistle is a demanding play, requiring the actor's best every moment, but we felt more than rewarded when our audience declared it "a cast of stars."

KATHLEEN E. KELLY,
Sponsor, Troupe 1249

Director was awarded a beautiful white carnation corsage for her excellent work.

We plan to hold another initiation later in the Spring. We enjoy working and playing together, always keeping first in our minds the Thespian motto, "Act well your part, there all the honor lies."—Opal Witham, Secretary.

LET'S MAKE A MOVIE

(Continued from page 11)

this illustration, for after your creative talents are channeled into the numerous jobs at hand, experimentation will become the challenge which makes each new day more interesting and stimulating than the last. You too will create "talking lights"!

This business of translating sounds into lights illuminates what I believe is the central creative problem of the film. This is to translate the words of a script into pictures which can be recorded on film. A movie is first a series of mental images in the mind of the writer. He translates these visual elements of the story into a script, using the left-hand-half of the page for picture description and the right-hand-half for dialogue, narration, sound, and music cues.

When the script has reached a satisfactory state of revision, as a result of suggestions from specialists from the cost-accountant to the prop man, the director takes over. It becomes his job to translate the words of the script back into tangible pictures and sounds on a roll of film. It is not enough for him to see the story in his mind's eye exactly as the writer saw it. He has to bring it to realization in a practical way. Even though he has a wide choice of film techniques — "live-action," "stop-action," or "animation" — the director must compromise the original conception for pictorial reality. Visual ideas can never be brought to fruition exactly as originally conceived. Instead, the finished production is often an improvement upon the original. Whether this illustrates the triumph of art over life or *vice-versa*, I don't know, but it happens all the same.

In an effort to organize his shooting, the director makes an accurate breakdown of the script. He determines the number of interior and exterior scenes he will need, the actors, costumes, and properties he will use, and as nearly as possible the types of shots he will shoot. Shots are designated according to the distance of the subject from the camera ("long shot," "medium shot," "close up," and variations of each), the shooting angle ("tilt," "pan," "dolly," and "crane" shots), and the amount of illumination ("low key," "side," and "general" lighting). By completing these decisions prior to actual shooting, the director saves his crew, his actors, and himself hours of waiting and ire. When actually shooting his scenes, the director always takes the precaution of extra "takes" so that he will be covered in case the first "take" proves to be "n.g." or no good. Re-takes, or re-staging of shots, are unprofitable, unpardonable, and unnecessary.

After "processing" at the film laboratory, the film "editor" takes the various scenes, cuts them to length, and splices them together into meaningful and communicative form. By inter-cutting a contrasting shot into the middle of a long scene, or by changing the angle of a

shot, the "editor" gives the film pace and timing. His contribution at this point is not unlike that of the stage director during final rehearsals. In countless ways, you make use of your knowledge of stage and radio in making a film.

From the brief general description of the three stages of film production I have given you, it is quite obvious that filmmaking requires teamwork. Only with close cooperation between the various specialists who share in its creation can a film triumph over the innate confusion and chaos and achieve the impact and excitement which qualify it as a work of art. Although each specialist must make a distinctive contribution and work under pressure, basic teamwork must prevail. It is in this way that the movies share in that inimitable "show must go on" tradition of the stage. I believe that, more than any other art medium, the movies are a group creation. As group effort, they are a valuable educational process.

Even though your first attempts with film should be in "live-action" (except for titles), it is a good thing to know about other methods of telling a story on film. "Live-action" depicts people or animals in their natural environments. The camera follows action at 24 frames per second, and later the film is projected at that speed, preserving a normal tempo. Variations of "live-action" are "slow-motion" and "accelerated-motion." "Slow-motion" stretches out an action by exposing more frames per second than

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the projector will show in that same time. "Accelerated-motion" condenses action by exposing fewer frames per second than the projector will show. Have you ever wondered why in silent Charlie Chaplin or Keystone Kop movies, action occurs at a ridiculously rapid gait? It is because silent films are shot at 16 frames per second. When silent pictures are shown on a sound projector at 24 frames per second, action is speeded up by one-third, resulting (quite unintentionally) in a ludicrous effect.

The second method we call "Stop-motion" because by exposing a single frame of film at a time, we can give life to inanimate things like puppets and commercial packages. "Stop-motion" is used to make the package of Lucky Strikes dance out of the landscape at you on television.

A clever variation of "stop-motion" photography is "time-lapse," which by exposing a single frame at numerous uniform intervals can compress the blossoming of a flower into a few seconds of film time. This technique is valuable in industry, as well as in nature study.

The third method in wide use is "animation," popularized in the animated

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cartoons of Walt Disney and others. With backgrounds painted on opaque material and characters on transparent acetate "cels," the illusion of action is created by exposing one frame of film at a time on slightly different "cels." "Animation" is expensive, costing from three to five times as much as "live-action," so it should be used judiciously.

Still, I would not like to convey the impression that anything in film-making is too difficult for students. To change that notion and give you an idea of what can be done, let me refer briefly to an animated color cartoon done entirely by three junior students (Wayne Boyer, Lawrence Janiak, and Ronald Larson) at Lane Technical High School in Chicago. Colorful, fast-moving, and ingenious, the film is called "Professor Diddlewit's Ectoplasm." With the help of their instructor, Mr. Charles Cooper, these boys shot their film with a home-movie type 8 mm. camera on a home-made animating stand. They recorded their sound track separately on a tape recorder, and they show their delightful film on a separate projector and tape recorder. Their project should serve as a challenge to other student movie-makers because it demonstrates how much can be done with a little basic equipment, ingenuity, and the desire to experiment.

And so, let's make a movie! Whether you produce a history of your school, or an adaptation of a play, or even a slide film on "How to Bake a Cake!" you'll be making a start, and after that you'll never want to quit.

To keep your technical problems simple and to save money, why not do as the boys from Lane Tech did? Shoot your photography first and then record a separate sound track on magnetic tape. You can have the track "married" to the picture at the laboratory, or you can play it separately (roughly synchronized) on a tape recorder.

Ingenious "voice-over-picture" narration or "dubbed-in" dialogue can help you avoid the problem of "lip-synchronization" completely. Shoot the dialogue scene from a reverse angle or cut to a "long shot" so that attention is drawn from the lips.

By innumerable ways you can work yourself around the prickly problems of film-making, if you plan for them early enough and start searching for the solutions. And after you have surmounted the problems and "released" the picture, you will look back on your experiments with pride and satisfaction. In nostalgia, then, you'll be able to share with me those wonderfully explicit get-started words:

Director: Roll 'em!

Asst. Dir.: (before lens with slate and "clapsticks") Take One . . . Track One . . . (Your School's) Story!

Cameraman: Camera up to speed!

Director: All right . . . Lights! . . . ACTION!

Yes, let's make a movie!

PUBLICATIONS FOR TEACHERS, DIRECTORS, AND STUDENTS OF DRAMATIC ARTS

ARENA STAGING, by Ted Skinner, Chairman, Department of Speech, Texas College of Arts and Industries, Kingsville. Contents: Housing; Lighting Equipment; Lighting Control; Scenery, Properties, Sound; Make-up and Costuming; Directing; Acting; Publicity, Promotion, Performance. Price, \$0.60

DRAMATICS DIRECTOR'S HANDBOOK. (Revised Edition). Edited by Ernest Bavelly. Contains a comprehensive discussion on how to teach dramatics at the secondary school level, by Katherine O'manney, a thorough discussion on the organization of high school dramatics club, and articles on play standards, organization of the production staff, play rehearsal schedule, publicity, preparation of handbills, etc. Price, 1.00

DIRECTORY OF PLAYS FOR ALL WOMEN CASTS, edited by William Ellis Jones. Contains a list of one-act plays, collections of one-act plays, full-length plays, and addresses of publishers. Price, \$0.25

DIRECTORY OF STAGE EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLY HOUSES, by W. Fredric Plette. A listing of the names and addresses of firms where the many theatre needs of the director may be met. Price, \$0.25

PLANNING AND EQUIPPING THE MODERN EDUCATIONAL THEATRE, by A. S. Gillette, Technical Director, University Theatre, State University of Iowa. A timely and authoritative publication on designing and furnishing the school theatre in terms of present-day requirements. Especially recommended for directors and school administrators. Price, \$0.60

HOW THEY WERE STAGED, edited by Earl W. Blank, Northeastern College. An amazing source of information for directors in schools, colleges, and community theatres. Contains a complete discussion on the actual casting, directing, costuming, advertising and staging of each of the following outstanding plays chosen for their suitability for amateur theatre groups: Junior Miss, Arsenic and Old Lace, What a Life, Stage Door, Two On An Island, Ladies in Retirement, Zaraqueta, Everyman, Boston Blues, The Green Vine, The Imaginary Invalid, The Eve of St. Mark, Lost Horizon, Sun-Up, Icebound, The Importance of Being Earnest, The Torch-Bearers, Nothing But the Truth, For Her C-h-e-ild's Sake, Kind Lady, Three Cornered Moon, The Trail of the Lonesome Pine, Charley's Aunt, Tish, The Fighting Littles, Captain Applejack, Skidding, Out of the Frying Pan, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Green Stockings, Seven Keys to Baldpate, Peter Pan, Lavender and Old Lace, Outward Bound, Candida, Pride and Prejudice, Moor Born, Murder in a Nunnery, Cyrano de Bergerac, The Cradle Song, Family Portrait, Death Takes a Holiday, and Letters to Lucerne. Price, \$1.00

PLAYS OF THE MONTH, edited by Earl W. Blank, contains reviews of thirty-three plays which were staged by Sponsors of Thespian Troupes. All these plays are recommended by the producing Sponsors. This pamphlet is a guide for play selection. Price, \$0.60

THEATRE ENJOYMENT, by Talbot Pearson. Especially recommended to all who really care for the theatre whether he be actor, back-stage personnel, audience. Price, \$0.60

THEATRE PUBLICITY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS. This publication presents a list of schemes and devices which give effective publicity to high school theatre productions and also presents information on an effective public relations program for the educational theatre along with a number of publicity programs actually employed by high school directors. Henry B. Seiber, public relations representative for DEATH OF A SALESMAN, is also one of the contributors. Price, \$0.25

TEACHING STUDENTS HOW TO DIRECT PLAYS, by C. Lowell Lees, University of Utah. Contents: More Plays Through Student Directors, What's in a Play, Painting Action Pictures, Seeing the Play as a Production, Finding the Cast, The Actor's Best Foot Forward, Tying the Play Together. Price, \$0.40

REHEARSAL TECHNIQUES: Contributors are Wesley Swanson, University of Illinois; Sam Boyd, Jr., West Virginia University; Frank M. Whiting, University of Minnesota; Charlotte Chorpennig, Goodman Theatre; Blandford Jennings, Clayton, Mo., High School; Marion Stuart, Champaign, Ill., Senior High School; Talbot Pearson. Price, \$0.60

DRAMATICS CLUB PROGRAMS, edited by Blandford Jennings, Clayton, Mo., High School. A collection of suggested programs based upon actual programs presented by high school dramatics clubs affiliated with the National Thespian Society. Price, \$0.25

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FIRST NIGHTS

(Continued from page 10)

worth considering. One, make a practice of timing each act during the last week and the nights of performance. This is a very good way to tell whether you are maintaining the pace that you had set or whether the cast is allowing it to drag. Of course there have to be allowances made for laughs, in case it is a comedy (I hope they don't come for anything but planned reasons) but if you are playing more than one performance the times should be comparable. Two, make it understood that the stage manager has the final word on all commands. Be sure that the players and the crews understand the necessity for such discipline. If you want a smoothly organized unit, you can only have one captain at the helm. In the professional theatre the curtain would stay up all night, even if the show were over, if the stage manager forgot to give the command to ring it down. So it must be with you. For only he knows when all of the props are set, the actors in place, the electrician is ready, and the curtain should be opened. Any other system will lead to the sight that all of us have seen too often: an actor or actors "caught" on stage when the curtain opened.

During the course of the act the stage manager and his assistant see that there is absolute silence backstage and that other actors do not stand around talking and standing in the entrances blocking the passageways so other actors might possibly miss a cue or make a late entrance. One or the other of the managers must then get from the cue sheet or prompt book the sound effects for which he is responsible and be waiting for his cue. He must further check with the electrician any cues that he may have and see that everything is done correctly on cue.

The assistant stage manager should see that the actors are ready for each of their entrance cues. The prop chairman must be near his prop table to see that each person has his hand properties before he goes on stage. Two minutes before the act is over, the stage manager should give a signal to the stage crew to stand by. And then about ten speeches before the end of the act, the stage manager should give a warning to the curtain man, the light man, and all others concerned. When the cue for the curtain comes, he gives the signal for its closing. He records the running time for the act.

Every curtain takes some time to close. The director should rehearse the pulling of the curtain so that it will close with the desired dramatic effect. This avoids the actors' having to hold a forced position for any length of time after the last word has been given. In the event the last words of an act are vitally important and the whole meaning of the play depends upon the audience's getting them, the director should plan

business to follow these last words so that the actors can follow through as the curtains close. The curtain then takes the final word for its cue.

The stage manager then calls "strike" whether it is a one-set show or not, and all of the actors must leave the stage even though they have no costume changes. If there is a change of scenery, the stage crew goes into its shift routine, and the other crews do whatever work they are scheduled to do. As soon as the changes have been made, the stage manager calls "Clear stage," and all but the actors who are to open the scene leave the stage. The assistant stage manager has given the actors a two minute warning before the end of the allotted time for the intermission.

After the same procedure of warning the house, the electrician, and the actors has been taken care of, the intermission ends, the stage lights come on, the curtain opens, and the second act begins. The stage manager records the time.

The same procedure is followed between the second and third acts. At the end of the show there should be a regular procedure worked out in the event it is the custom to have curtain calls. By procedure is meant not only the order that the actors will stand in the final lineup, but what lights will be used, and how many curtain calls you are going to take. For no reason whatsoever, so far as I am concerned, would it be permis-

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sible to give actors bouquets or other embellishments over the footlights. If they receive them in their dressing rooms after the show, that is none of a director's business. But to allow an individual to be singled out for specific commendation by a fond father is a sure path to discrimination and exhibitionism. In short, it defeats the very thing you are striving for: a unity of purpose and effort.

Finally, a director must remember that he must plan for the TOTAL activities that surround a play. Such seemingly small items as having a convenient place to be used for a check room, having enough of the right kind of change at the door, having signs that direct one to the rest rooms, having ushers show one to a seat and offer a program affect a visitor's willingness to accept what he sees on the stage mighty. Who knows but what your visitor might get such a feeling of self-importance from such courtesies that he might be led to feel that he is indeed among ladies and gentlemen.

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PROPS ROOM

(Continued from page 9)

that same period. Had we rented costumes we would have spent more than two thousand dollars and had nothing to show for our efforts. We once owned forty more gowns and housecoats than the present sixty-odd sizes and colors, but sold them to the students who had worn them in the production and wanted them for their own wardrobes. The price they paid for the outfit was the same as we paid for it plus the cost of its cleaning. To be certain, we made no profit, but we lost nothing either, and it is those same girls who are now remembering to send us their discarded gowns for the collection instead of sending them to the rummage sales.

We never worry about costumes now. When we are in need, we seek the help of our Home Economics department. In return, we make their fashion show at the end of the term beautiful and glamorous with lights, backgrounds, and furnish talent for their Home Economic Teas and Mothers' Program.

How to keep things from the moths? A generous use of the old fashioned type moth ball in the storage room, bags, boxes, and furniture cushions is the answer. We use ten to twenty pounds of these naphthalene flakes and balls. A day in the open air and the disagreeable odor is dispelled.

I will admit that the care of the Props room is work, but many hands make light this work when cooperation is your goal. Our last task in the late spring is inventory and demoting. We make a list, then, of the projects to plan for the opening weeks of school. The officers and the committee chairmen assist in this task. It takes us about five hours to complete the check-up, for we have one large cupboard in the senior high school, a large room for furniture at the grade school, two costume cupboards in the upper hall at the junior high school, and the storage space under the stage of the junior high school auditorium for sets and electric equipment. We have no stage of our own in the senior high school; therefore every production involves a real moving in and moving out day for us.

Begin to collect now; in a year or two folks you never met, but who know of your collection will call you at home or at school and tell you what they have that you might use. We always arrange for a member of the costume or prop committee to call at the house and arrange for the collection of the donation. We thank the donor with a personal note from the troupe secretary and make a note to give him complimentary tickets to the performance in which we will use his contribution. If it is something we cannot use, we cheerfully explain that we have others, or have no place to store so much and thank him for his thoughtfulness. Incidentally this latter rarely happens.

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"Stay Tuned For"	Nov. 10	Oct. 20, Nov. 12, Dec. 20, Jan. 19, Feb. 14, Mar. 19, Apr. 15,	Apr. 8
"Music in the Air"	Dec. 8	Thespian Chatter	
"That's Right, You're Wrong!"	Jan. 7	Oct. 22, Dec. 22, Jan. 22, Feb. 22, Mar. 22, Apr. 22,	May 20
"Put Yourself 'On-the-Spot'"	Feb. 12	"Troupe 1251 Shows the Way"	Apr. 19
"School Court of the Air"	Mar. 11	Trumbo, Charles R.: "David Garrick"	Feb. 8
		—"Colley Cibber"	May 6
		TV (Reviews)	
		Oct. 19, Nov. 15, Dec. 19, Jan. 20, Feb. 19, Mar. 20, Apr. 18,	May 22
		"University of Minnesota High School Theatre Workshop"	Mar. 10
		"We Film the Plays"	Jan. 10
		Wise, Robert O., Jr.: "Don't Overlook Variety"	May 8
		Zitrone, Leon: "France: World Theatre Center"	May 7

DON'T OVERLOOK VARIETY

(Continued from page 8)

same time, serve another valuable purpose—cultivation of potential theatre fans among the children.

Musical drama, or spectacle, is a wonderful method of gaining variety. The music teacher is often looking for an opportunity for her groups to perform, and the drama director should not overlook this possibility. The Gilbert and Sullivan operettas make fine theatre as do more modern musicals like *Brigadoon* or *Sing Out, Sweet Land*. The opportunities in this field are almost unlimited.

In addition to alternating the types of drama, other ways of gaining variety are available. Varying the type of setting is one of the most important of these other methods. A long succession of living rooms or box sets can be extremely tiresome to the audience. Plays with interior settings should be varied with plays of exterior settings. Two plays with very interesting exteriors are *The Great Big Doorstep* and *A Young Man's Fancy*. Stylized settings are a possibility; and while they are not difficult to construct, they are different. In a school used to box sets, an occasional draped set can be effective; or a play with only set pieces can be stimulating. The absence of scenery such as in *Our Town* is another method to consider. Exploration in set variety is very rewarding and makes the audience eager for the curtain to open to see what has been done this time.

Arena theatre, covered so thoroughly and well in the series of articles by Ted Skinner in last year's DRAMATICS, offers a method of production that is likely to be entirely new to the audience. An arena style production has much to say for itself and should not be overlooked as a possibility in planning a season.

Costume plays provide a welcome change to the audience and to the actors as well. Students feel they are really playing a part if they are wearing a beautiful Restoration gown, or a fancy military uniform. Their sense of make-believe is enhanced. Costume plays are of every type: *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* for serious drama; Moliere's *The Imaginary Invalid* for comedy; and *The Black Flamingo* for melodrama. Most children's theatre plays are costume plays, and so this type of play can provide variety in two forms.

Varying the size of the cast is a method of obtaining variety often overlooked. Small casts give a play a unity that the audience enjoys, while a large cast makes the audience eager to see who is coming on next. A crowd scene well handled will electrify any audience.

All of these various means of obtaining variety should be considered in planning the next season. While usually the high school season consists of three plays at the most, plan the program over two or three years. Specific plays do not need to be chosen that far in advance, but the



Troupe 413's *Brigadoon* stage crew relaxes after "Operation Strike."

THE STAGE CREW — STAR OF THE SHOW

by VIRNELLE JONES

"**O**PERATION-SHED!" "Sky drop down! Trees up left and up right. Bushes down left! Barn — 1-2-3-4-5-6-Top!" "Curtain!"

Fifty seconds flat. Pretty good timing for a complete set change. Good for professionals; unbelievable for high school Thespians.

But the eleven set changes carried out quickly, quietly, and flawlessly by the thirteen eager drama students of Troupe 413, Shawnee-Mission High School, took place so rapidly, the actors scarcely had time to take their places on stage while the orchestra leader hurried to lift his baton for the next overture.

The show, *Brigadoon*, was presented by the vocal and instrumental departments of Shawnee-Mission High School, Thespian Troupe 413, Merriam, Kansas. But *Brigadoon* would not have been the polished production it was had it not been for the capable youngsters behind the scenes. These are the unsung heroes of any production—those who do manual labor; those who get no curtain call; those who often have earned this curtain call even more than the most charming of leading ladies.

When our drama department was asked to stage *Brigadoon*, we readily accepted, for we believed only two sets would be used and the experience of making these would be beneficial. Within two weeks, these sets had been constructed so we went ahead to complete the eleven stage settings: A Forest in the Scottish Highlands; The Village of Brigadoon; An Open Shed; The Glen; Mr. Lundie's House; Jeannie's House; A Road in Brigadoon; A Forest inside Brigadoon; A Bar in New York City; and The Forest.

The next step was to master the scenery changes. Several technical rehearsals enabled this to be done rapidly and efficiently. But it was impossible in the time allotted to brace the scenery in a conventional manner. Holding the scenery during the entire production was the only solution. The basic set—thirty feet of flats on which was painted the village of Brigadoon—was secured to the back wall of the stage and never moved. But all other scenes were supported by crew members—nine girls and four boys. Each had an assignment, and each had the fate of the show in his hands. One slip and *Brigadoon* would have become a farce rather than a beautiful fantasy of two American hunters who discovered this mythical village in the Scottish Highlands.

Set changes took from ten seconds to two and one-half minutes. But the greatest change was from Brigadoon Square to the Brochie Open shed. The six flats comprising the walls were placed at the sides and back of the stage. One member was assigned to each section which was four feet wide and eight or nine feet tall. These were in place within twenty seconds after the curtain hit. Four other crew members ran in with the roof of the shed, and using hand-made supports four feet in length, lifted it in place.

The New York Bar Scene took place outside the second master curtain. However, the settings of *Brigadoon* were mystically revealed behind a blue scrim.

In the final scene, *Brigadoon* was not visible until the glen slid off, the sky drop lifted, and the village once again came to light.

There are many who give full credit for the success of a production solely to the actors on stage. But oftentimes, even the most dramatic role is negligible to the drama which one can find behind the scenes. And as the curtain calls once again reveal the actors who have already taken more than their share of bows, the stage crew prepares for "Operation Strike!" When the applause dies away, the weary stage hands sit in the shadows and attempt to rub out some of the aches and pains in one another's shoulders. They remain a gallant, yet unrecognized group of troupers; each feeling the satisfaction of a job well done, and sensing the unvoiced admiration of his director who knows that this crew—even without grease paint—is truly the star of the show.

program should be planned to make the plays differ from each other in this season, and to make this season differ from the last, or from the next. Variety is the

frosting on the cake for the season, and it will put fresh life behind the footlights and have the audience in their seats for the next play.

FRANCE

(Continued from page 7)

is a long procession of priests, carrying lighted candles, and clad in black capes over white robes.

The stage has the following dimensions: 100 yards wide; 140 yards deep (yes, 140); behind the stage, stretches a lawn 230 yards wide, which means that majestic effects with crowd scenes can be staged. A total of 3300 square yards is at the disposal of the producer. For example, in the revolution scenes of Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, we saw, last year, 392 actors on stage simultaneously. To dress these 392 actors, nearly three miles of material was needed. The toga worn by Jacques Dacmuine, who was playing *Coriolanus*, needed 33 square yards of cloth. But this record was beaten in the *Martyrdom of San Sebastian*, by d'Annunzio, where each witch wore 50 square yards of material.

Among the plays presented on this magnificent arena were Shakespeare's *Midsummer-night's Dream*; Christopher Marlowe's *Edward the Second*, which was new for many of us over here; several plays by Bertold Brecht, the German revolutionary playwright; of course the great classical Greek dramas (last year it was *Prometheus Bound*, by Aeschylus), and naturally the French classics. If you come this year, you can see several of Moliere's plays. You know that he wrote especially to please Louis the XIV, and that the King ordered most of the "premieres" to be given in the gardens of Versailles; and when we see them today, performed in this antique setting, the dispute as to whether the French seventeenth century writers were "classical" or not, seems to be settled: if they were NOT classics, they would not fit in so beautifully to this framework.

But Lyons Festival means also other things besides the use of these two theatres. For example, in the center of the city itself, concerts of ancient music are given in the inner courtyards of 14th and 15th century mansions amid a network of iron traced gates. And also, the performance of *Jedermann*, religious legend of Hugo Von Hoffmannsthal, is staged on the parvis of St. Jean's Cathedral, where each detail of architecture is illuminated especially for the night performance.

When you come to Lyons, you will find yourself, at the same time, breathing the atmosphere of Roman times, the Renaissance, the French 17th century, and our modern era. It's a unique combination. If you want details, write to "Festival de Lyon, Lyon, France. In French, Lyon does not have an 'S'."

THE PARIS FESTIVAL

You may have noticed, while reading about the Lyon Festival, that despite the richness of the French theatre, foreign plays are given a large place over here. This international spirit has brought about the creation of an "international dramatic festival" held annually in Paris itself.

You've heard about spring in Paris. It's heavenly. After walks during the daytime, the open air dinners at night—well, this year you'll have to cut those dinners short, to go to the Sarah Bernhardt Theatre, which stands overlooking the river Seine, in the very heart of old Paris. Foreign companies, coming from 15 different countries, will each give a series of performances, in their own language, from May the 15th to July the 14th, with the climax of course on the last day, the Bastille Day. It's possible on that day, hundreds of actors from many different countries, will join in unison to sing—in French this time—our *Marseillaise*.

Last year, the best performances were given by the Irish Company, with their production of Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World*, in English of course; and Ibsen's *Ghosts*, played in Norwegian, by the Oslo National Theatre Group. As art knows no frontiers, several troupes from behind the Iron Curtain were there, and I personally saw the Poles, playing of course in Polish: believe me, political ideologies have not yet spoilt, and not even deformed, the talent of these ac-

tors. When you see that, you can realize that "directed art" is senseless. It can be said to the credit of humanity that art is above politics, and out of its reach. This is a comforting thought.

This year's program as follows, will be especially interesting:

Eastern Germany: *The Chalk Circle in the Caucasus*, by Bertold Brecht, produced by the author.

Western Germany: *Mary Stuart*, by Schiller, performed by the Stuttgart Staatstheatre.

Canada: The Montreal New World Theatre will give, in French, three one-act plays by Moliere.

Finland will also play our Moliere, but this time, in Finnish. The Suomen Kansallisteateri Troupe has chosen *L'Acare*.

Spain will send to Paris *La Malquerida*, by Benavente, played by the Maria Guerrero Theatre from Madrid.

Ireland will give two plays: *The Plough and the Stars*, by Sean O'Casey, by the Abbey Theatre from Dublin, in English, and a French play, translated into Gaelic by Liam O'Brian, *The Farce of the Hunchbacks*, by Pierre Jolivet, a play, by the way, I do not know. It will be amusing to see it in Gaelic: for you, it would be like seeing an American film dubbed in French.

Norway will give three plays: a Norwegian one: *Bergljot*, by Bjornson Grug; and two French plays, also in Norwegian: *The Human Voice*, by Jean Cocteau, who has just been elected to the French Academy, and *Jean Anouilh's Medea*.

The United States will give another *Medea* that of R. Jeffers, with Judith Anderson playing the lead, and produced by Guthrie McClintic; and also *The Skin of Our Teeth*, by Thornton Wilder, which was supposed to have been produced by Eliel Kazan, but finally the producer will be R. Whitehead, with Helen Hayes and Mary Martin.

A third *Medea* will also be given: that of Grillparzer, the famous Austrian playwright, by the Burgtheatre, a Viennese Company, which will also play Schnitzler's *Liebelei* and *Countess Mitzl*. We will be able to compare Austrian and French wit.

Poland will be represented by a production of *The Vengeance*, by Fredro, and *Summer in Nohant*, by Iwaszekiewicz. Nohant, being a French village where George Sand lived, the play is probably about her love affair with Chopin. The music will certainly not be by Beethoven.

Portugal sends the Donal Maria Theatre of Lisbon.

The Netherlands will give *Oedipus Rex*, by Sophocles, produced by Johan de Meester, with the troupe of the Nederlandse Comedie, of Amsterdam.

Switzerland will play, in German, Goethe's *Stella*, with the Zurich Schauspielhaus.

Sweden inevitably gives us Strindberg. But we would be wrong to complain, as the plays chosen are *The Father*, and *Miss Julie*, with all the stars from the Kungliga Dramatiska Teatern of Stockholm.

Great Britain: The Workshop Theatre will play *Arden of Feversham*, and Ben Johnson's *Volpone*, produced by Joan Littlewood.

Italy: *Napoli Millionario*, by the Naples Theatre, directed and produced by Eduardo de Filippo.

So, as you see, the word "international" was not too strong to describe this festival. And what is really extraordinary is that each of these plays will have a full house. So 2000 Parisians (and visitors) will gather together every evening, often to see plays in absolutely foreign languages, for the love of the Theatre. The shades of the great Sarah Bernhardt, in whose theatre the festival is taking place, will rejoice.

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BRIEF VIEWS

By WILLARD FRIEDERICH



THE ABC'S OF PLAY PRODUCING by Howard Bailey. 1955, David McKay Co., 276 pp.

Mr. Bailey, Head of the Department of Theater Art at Rollins College, has written a handbook for nonprofessionals that is largely aimed at the director. With clarity, humor, and wisdom born of long experience he has prepared for the uncertain beginner a blueprint that can guide him chronologically through the successive steps of production: selection, advance preparation, casting, rehearsal, and running the show. Also included are detailed instructions on some phases which are usually minimized or often entirely ignored in many similar books: the backstage and front-of-the-house management, publicity, and special problems to be found in producing high school plays, musicals, arena shows, pageants, religious dramas. An excellent and lengthy list of recommended plays (not annotated, however), categorized as to their worth for different groups and purposes, completes the book.

Although some directors will not always find the author's advice in agreement with their own procedures, there is no doubt that his methods are among those tested in the fires of the amateur theater's purgatory and found to be true, at least by many directors. His own opinions are amply illustrated and corroborated by quotes from other authorities, examples from his own and others' experiences, line drawings, and anecdotes—all of which make for not only profitable but enjoyable reading as well.

EDUCATORS GUIDE TO FREE TAPES, SCRIPTS, AND TRANSCRIPTIONS, edited by W. A. Wittich and G. L. Hanson. 1955, Educators Progress Service (Randolph, Wis.), 144 pp.

The Educators Progress Service's long-familiar and indispensable catalogue *Educators Guide to Free Films*, has now been joined by a similar catalogue of other audio teaching aids. This first edition includes 492 titles: 375 tapes, 88 scripts, 29 transcriptions. The majority of them will not prove particularly apropos to the speech and drama teacher, but the section on Literature includes many tapes (all of them from the Division of University Extension, Boston) of dramatizations of famous short stories and novels which should prove useful in English or speech classes. There are also an impressive looking series of scenes from great plays (thirty-minute tapes), both classic and modern, featuring well-known modern actors and actresses, and four sixty-minute tapes of Theatre Guild of the Air productions of *Valley Forge*, *Mary of Scotland*, *Macbeth*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. These should be most welcome to the drama teacher. Many of the available scripts, although the subject-matter does not pertain to the speech field, might be used with profit in radio and interpretation classes. Short essays on audio materials and on use of radio scripts in teaching speech skills and four sample radio scripts (two dramas, an interview, and a narration) may also furnish helpful hints and practice materials for the teacher.

THEATRICAL LIGHTING PRACTICE by Joel Rubin and Leland Watson. 1954, Theatre Arts Inc., 142 pp.

Two protégés of Yale's Stanley McCandless pool their experiences and resources in presenting the latest work on lighting the stage—and in this case the stage may be located anywhere from the "Met" to a tent. Mr. Rubin will undoubtedly be remembered by the readers of DRAMATICS as the author of that excellent series of articles, *Stage Lighting for High School Theaters*. This book, although excellent, will probably prove not quite so useful to the aver-

age high school electrician; for it is undoubtedly too advanced for any but the superior adolescent. In their Foreword the authors explicitly declare that their purpose is to "present materials which supplement . . . the information on theatre lighting published in the basic textbooks." This they do with clarity and skill, going into detail on many special lighting problems that the texts on fundamentals often do not touch or elaborate upon. Thus, after a brief resume of basic lighting procedures and principles, they describe the desirable equipment and the designing and executing of lighting for musicals, ballet and modern dance, opera, arena productions, open-air performances, puppetry, and television. Many of these phases of theater of course do not lie within the scope of secondary school production. In like vein much of the space devoted to descriptions of the duties of professional lighting experts and of job opportunities and many of the excellent light plots are wasted, in the practical sense, on the youngster—although, naturally, all of this information may often be interesting to him in the theoretical sense. Even though much of the information is presented from the ideal point of view of the top-notch theater and lighting setup, however, many of the suggestions should be helpful when adapted to each school's individual circumstances.

SPICE OF LIFE, a collection of women's monologues by various authors. 1954, Baker, 80 pp.

Eighteen monologues, ranging from very short ones to a few of medium length, comprise this collection. Characters range from young to old and cover a liberal scope of types. True, virtually all the types are obvious and well-known to the stage, but youngsters will probably enjoy them and profit from working on several of them. It should be emphasized that these are not interpretative readings, but characterizations to be acted on full stage, preferably with costumes and perhaps even with props. They should be useful laboratory exercises for acting classes.

TELEVISION WORKS LIKE THIS by Jeanne and Robert Bendick. McGraw-Hill, 1954, Rev., 64 pp.

If an attempt to convey the principles of TV in a minimum of words and a maximum of cleverly humorous drawings is at all possible, then this intriguing little book seems to have done the trick. Your reviewer is not scientifically minded enough to comprehend the mysteries of television, so this book, ostensibly aimed at adolescents, was also apparently meant for him—as it might be for any other adults who are in the kindergarten class of electronics. At any rate, this reader now knows more about the workings of TV than he did before.

In addition to explanations of the studio setup, electronic principles, and TV equipment, there is also coverage of personnel, procedures, and types of programs. All copy is directed at the layman, and the sketches are both accurate and wry. A dictionary of terms, also illustrated, is included for those who want to learn the jargon of TV. Surely this book should be a help to the teacher who must help youngsters comprehend the most recent—and perhaps the most vital—of our media of communication.

EUROPE ON THE AISLE by Claudia Cassidy. Random House, 1954, 251 pp.

The chief reason this book is included here is that the author is one of the most well-known drama and music critics in the country. Her column in the CHICAGO TRIBUNE has probably

been the morgue for more productions and performers than would ever admit it. This account of her roving around Europe on a tour jam-packed with deadlines of all kinds is chatty, often sketchy, usually interesting, and always personal; for she intends no more than to give you her impressions of what she saw and heard. Many readers will have some difficulty following her at times, for her constant allusions to the arts, people, and places are all made with the easy assurance and brevity of one to whom they are everyday conversation and who likewise assumes that her readers have the same background.

MASTERS OF THE DRAMA by John Gassner. Third Ed., 1954, Dover, 890 pp.

This magnificent book should need no introduction to anyone interested in theatre. With few exceptions most theatre devotees would concur that this is the most complete, erudite, authoritative, interpretive, and fascinating history of the theatre in existence. The former editions ran from the earliest beginnings by primitive man to 1940 (with a brief supplement that brought us to 1945); the new edition adds 55 pages on post World War II drama, with special emphases on such provocative moderns as Lorca, Brecht, Giraudoux, Anouilh, Sartre, Eliot, Fry, Williams, and Miller. As usual these brief critiques are among the keenest evaluations of these writers by modern critics. The clarifying chronological chart, "Theatre and Man in the Western World," and the exhaustive bibliographies have been brought up to date in the author's usual thorough fashion. If there is only one book which anyone interested in the history and evaluation of world theatre and drama can afford, this is the book!

'SNO HAVEN by Lee and Lynde Miller. 3-act mystery; Banner Play Bureau; 8M, 11W. Royalty: purchase of 15 copies. Setting: rustic lounge at Snow Haven Winter Resort.

Although these characters and this situation (a heterogeneous group of people are accidentally brought together in a winter resort and realize that one of them is a criminal) have all been met with many times before, this play may prove a boon to some groups, especially a senior class that is looking for an entertaining script with lots of fairly easy and obvious roles in it. The mystery is exciting enough, though some may complain that not all the suspicious actions of the non-guilty are ever cleared up. Many of the lines are good, with the exception of some given by the poetry-reciting "student," the flag-waving heroine, and the ubiquitous precocious child; and the roles are nicely balanced.

Co-authored by the sponsor of Troupe 59, Danville, Illinois, this script has been tested in production at that school, and many of the expected bugs of a new script have been eliminated. Always a popular type of play with casts and audiences, this mystery-comedy should prove as satisfactory as most of them now on the market.

STRAWBERRY CIRCLE by Frank Watron. 3-act comedy; Samuel French; 3M, 4W, 3C. Royalty: \$25. Setting: lobby of a small western inn.

A somewhat different story is a welcomed addition to any play list, and this one certainly fits the bill. A father's indecision over which of two women to choose for his second wife produces great turmoil in his two youngsters. Visiting a mountain resort and being very susceptible to the Indian lore of the locality, the two children employ various tricks and invoke old superstitions to influence their father; but they succeed only in producing more confusion and getting themselves into danger. Eventually, however, father makes the right decision, and the evil Indian omens are interpreted in a new light. There are interesting character roles of the Indian family, the suspicious guest, and the aging proprietress of the inn; but even the so-called straight roles are far more than mere cardboard cutouts.

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